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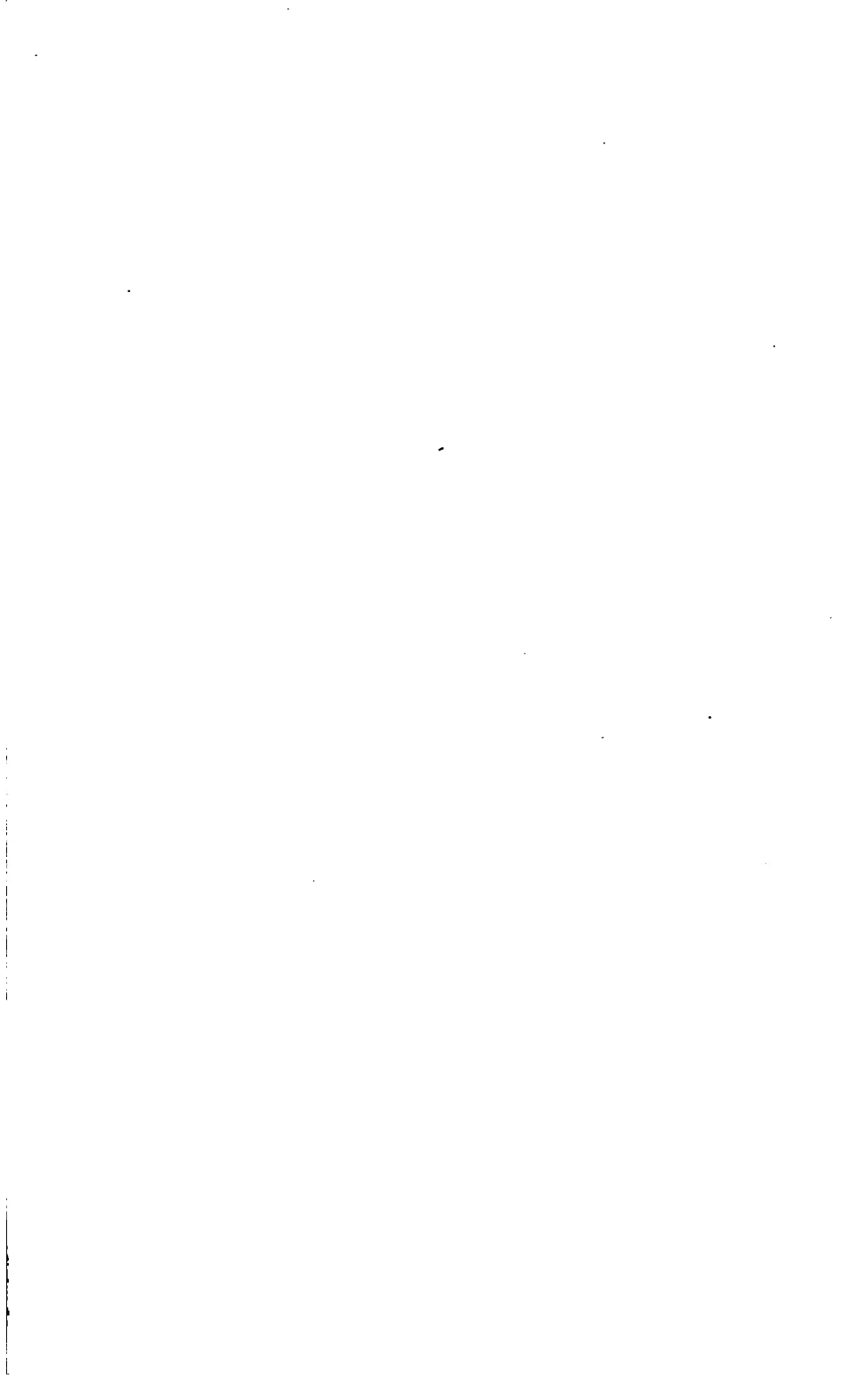
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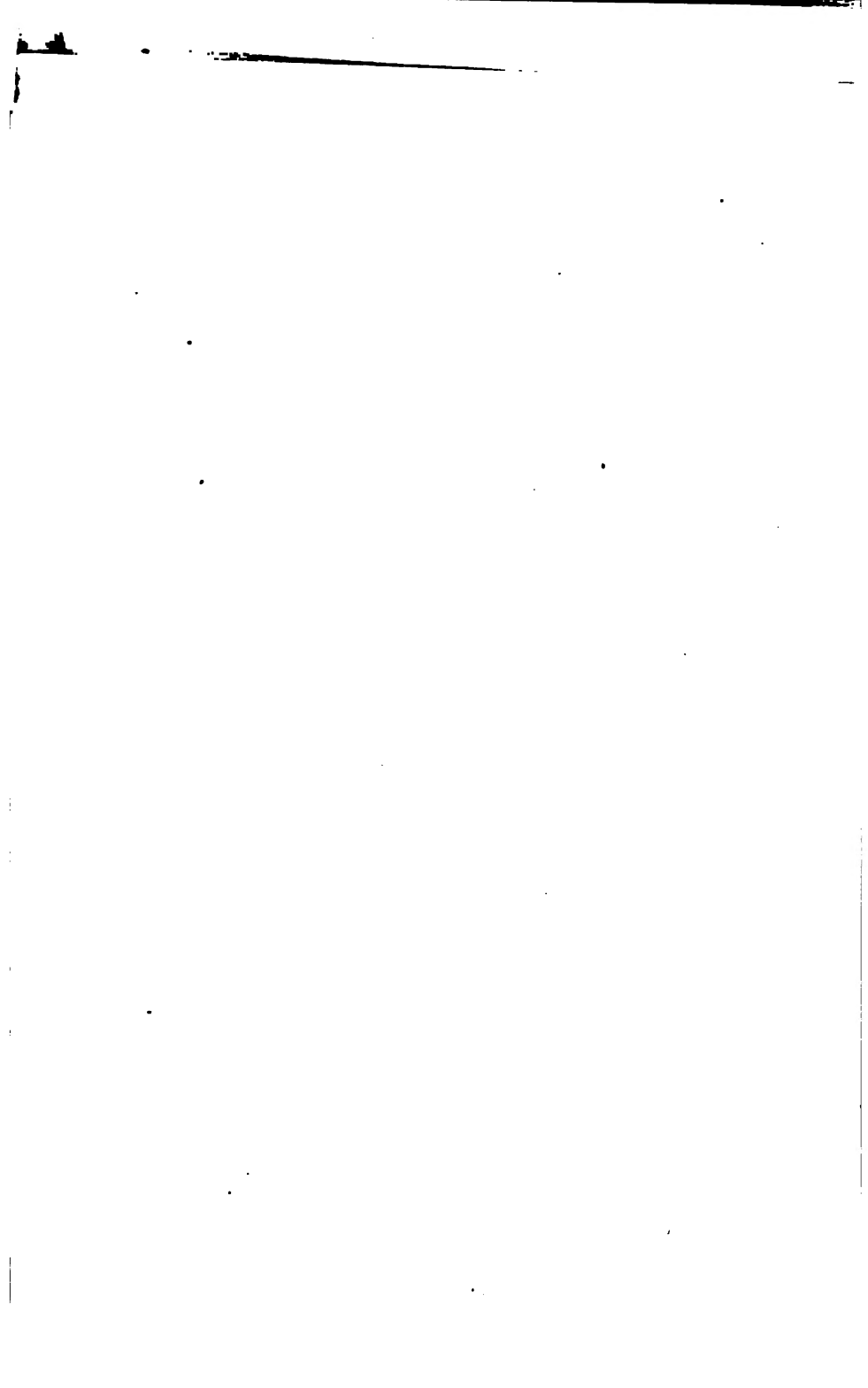
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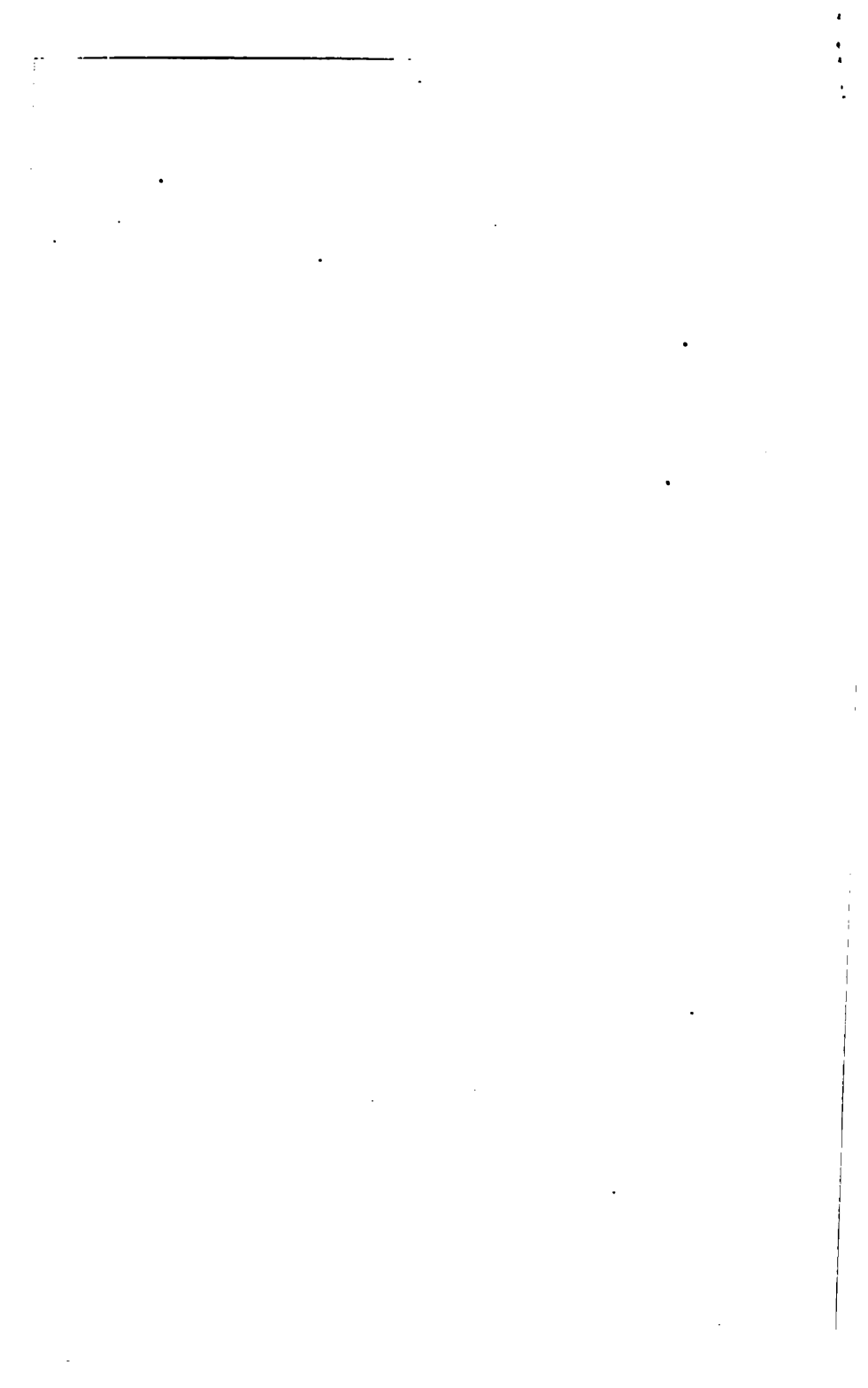
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A
DIARY
OF
TWO PARLIAMENTS.

BY
HENRY W. LUCY.

THE DISRAELI PARLIAMENT.
1874—1880.

SECOND EDITION.

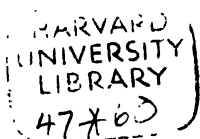
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m.a. Potter

To
THE EARL OF ROSEBERY,

WHO SUGGESTED THE PLAN OF

This Book,

IT IS

INSCRIBED

WITH SINCERE REGARD.

PREFACE.

THESE Volumes are literally, as they profess to be, a Diary of events passing under the eye of an observer. The record was penned often within an hour of the event. Some portions of it were actually printed in the "Daily News" of the following morning, and others within the current week in the "World" or the "Observer." Thus vividness of impression is fully retained, though sometimes it is to be feared at the cost of accuracy of judgment. It would be more agreeable to modify some of the personal characterisations of public men; but wherein they are faulty they stand corrected by further development of the personages sketched. They were jotted down honestly, without favour or prejudice, and, balancing considerations, it has been thought better to let them stand precisely as they were written.

In his "Memoirs of the Reign of George the Second," Lord Hervey (whom Thackeray says he "hates," and from whom he draws so much to illustrate his lecture on the times of George the Second)

says of his own writing: "No one who did not live in these times will, I dare say, believe but some of those I describe in these papers must have had some hard features and deformities exaggerated and heightened by the malice and ill-nature of the painter who drew them. Others, perhaps, will say that at least no painter is obliged to draw every wart or wen or hump-back in its full proportions, and that I might have softened these blemishes where I found them. But I am determined to report everything just as it is, or at least, just as it appears to me."

It is in this spirit, and animated by no other, that this Diary has been written.

H. W. L.

London, Feb., 1885.

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A

DIARY OF TWO PARLIAMENTS.

THE DISRAELI PARLIAMENT, 1874—1880.

On the morning of the 24th of January, 1874, the nation was startled by learning that the Parliament of 1868 was forthwith to be dissolved. The announcement was made in the form of an address by Mr. Gladstone to the electors of Greenwich. "That authority," he said, "which was in 1868 amply confided by the nation to the Liberal party and its leaders, if it has now sunk below the point necessary for the due defence and prosecution of the public interests, can in no way be so legitimately and effectually restored as by an appeal to the people, who by their reply to such an appeal may place beyond all challenge two great questions—the first, what they think of the manner in which the commission granted in 1868 has been executed; the second, what further commission they now think fit to give to their representatives, and to what hands its fulfilment and the administration of the Government are to be entrusted." "A prolix narrative," Mr. Disraeli called it when, two days later, he followed it up by the issue of an address to the electors of Buckinghamshire. In the General Election which ensued the Liberal majority—116 when Parliament met in 1868, and reduced during the period of its existence to between 60 and 70—was entirely swept away, and Mr. Disraeli took office with a majority of 51. On the 5th of March the new Parliament was opened by Royal Commission.

SESSION 1874.

CHAPTER I.

QUIET DAYS.

Opening of new Parliament—Swearing in—"A good deal has happened in the interval"—Vote of Thanks for the Ashantee Campaign—The Conservative Budget—Mr. Gladstone criticises the Budget—Mr. Smollett attacks the late Premier.

Mar. 5. — Opening of new Parliament. The appearance this afternoon of Roebuck, Julian Goldsmid, Newdegate, and Muntz upon the long-deserted floor of the House of Commons was so nearly simultaneous that it would be dangerous to claim for any one of them the high distinction of having been the first member of the ninth Parliament of Queen Victoria to enter upon the scene of his future labours. Absolutely the first comer was, however, amongst the four gentlemen named, and, though Parliament had been summoned to meet at two o'clock, it was not far past noon when they were observed within the bar. Their entrance broke the spell which had seemed to hang over the place, and scarcely had they advanced midway up the floor than entered Charley, Torrens, Plimsoll, John Hay, Russell Gurney, followed at the briefest of intervals by Dilke, Macdonald, the working men's member for Stafford, Charles Reed, and nearly the full roll of the House.

By half-past one the floor of the House was densely crowded, and those who had come earliest began to take their seats. Roebuck was already seated, selecting the second place on the front bench below the gangway on the Opposition side, where he held a sort of *levée*, old members coming up to shake hands with him, and young members obtaining an introduction to a man who had made his mark in the House whilst they were schoolboys. George Bowyer occupied the seat by the gangway next to Roebuck, but gave way presently when Brand, the Speaker of the late House, having passed through a troop of congratulatory friends, came up and claimed the position usually

occupied by the Speaker-elect pending the moving and seconding of the proposition for his election.

Of the two parties the Conservatives were by far the more ready to take their seats, the benches to the right of the Speaker's empty chair being, half an hour before the opening of Parliament, well filled. The Liberals for the most part stood and chatted in the throng on the floor of the House. The front Opposition bench was at this time tenantless, but Arthur Mills, the Marquis of Hamilton, and Colonel North were prominent upon the Treasury bench. On this same bench, but less noticeable by reason of their position under the shadow of the gallery, were Hubbard and Alderman Cotton, two of the members for the City of London, who were thus vindicating an old privilege pertaining to the City of having its members seated on the right hand of the Speaker, or at least at the right arm of the Speaker's chair, upon the opening of a new Parliament.

The handsome face of John Hay shone on the first bench behind the Treasury, he having selected the corner seat made famous in the last Parliament by the unvarying presence of Edgar Bowring. Newdegate had early chosen a seat below the gangway corresponding to that occupied by him on the opposite side in recent Sessions. But during the first half-hour he was content to mark his possession by depositing his hat, whilst he wandered to and fro with an air of mournful restlessness which seemed to betoken that, though Disraeli was at length at the head of a substantial majority, still he was not happy.

Childers was the first ex-Minister to arrive, and he was closely followed by W. H. Smith, the pioneer representative of the new Government. The Financial Secretary to the Treasury, though keeping about the neighbourhood, long avoided taking his seat on the Ministerial bench, and it was not till the arrival of Selwin-Ibbetson that he seated himself in Cardwell's old place, the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department sitting on his left hand, the two Ministers being presently joined by Percy Herbert. About this time Henry James and William Harcourt entered and marked the two great gulfs bridged since last they appeared in the House, by passing by the seats below the gangway on the Ministerial side and taking up positions on the front Opposition bench. Here they found Lowe, who

had quietly entered from behind the Speaker's chair, and sat there neither seeking recognition nor offering greeting.

At five minutes to two Erskine May, the Clerk of the House, entered, with his two colleagues, and took his seat at the table, members thereupon completing the disposition of themselves upon the yet unoccupied seats. A few minutes after two a shout of "Black Rod!" was heard at the door, and deep silence falling upon the House, Black Rod approached with an easy confidence that contrasted strangely with the profoundly humble and thrice-bowing manner with which the messenger of the House of Lords is accustomed to approach the Commons. The contrast grew in depth when Black Rod prefaced his invitation to visit the House of Lords by use of the word "gentlemen." But Black Rod was strictly in order alike in the omission of his wonted obeisance when there was neither mace on the table nor Speaker in the chair, and in addressing as "Gentlemen" a House which as yet was unprovided with a Speaker.

In the absence of a Speaker, it was Erskine May who followed Black Rod, and led through the dense crowd congregated in the outer hall a long string of "gentlemen" privileged at least to hear the Commission read, and assist at the preliminary ceremony of opening Parliament. The House of Lords seemed almost empty to those who had just left the other House crowded to the bar. The emptiness served to make more conspicuous the five *bizarre* figures, dressed in scarlet cloaks slashed with bars of ermine, which sat in a row upon a form before the throne, immovable, and crowned with cocked hats. The Ministerial bench was bare, and the Bishop of St. Davids and the Bishop of Lichfield, in their lawn sleeves and gowns, formed the majority of the available voting power on the back benches. On the front Opposition bench sat the ex-Lord Chancellor, Lord Selborne, Lord Chelmsford, Lord Denman, and Lord Skelmersdale. The benches behind were fairly filled, a large contingent of ladies having joined the Opposition, adding fresh and fairer tints to the monotony of the dead level of red cloth which the seats elsewhere presented.

As soon as Erskine May and a strong contingent of the Commons reached the bar of the House, the Clerk, taking in

hand a roll of parchment, read how the Queen had been pleased to grant power by Royal Commission to certain noble lords, at mention of whose respective names the Clerk looked up at the five figures upon the woolsack, and in due order a hand emerged from beneath one of the cloaks, one of the cocked hats was taken off one of the heads, and a figure bowed. The reading of the Commission being completed, the middle figure, distinguished by the addition of a wig to its costume, rose, and in a loud voice, which instantly betrayed the presence of Lord Cairns, the new Lord Chancellor, informed Parliament that as soon as the members had been sworn, the cause of the calling together the Houses would be declared. In the meantime his lordship directed the gentlemen of the House of Commons to repair to the place where they were to sit, and then choose "some proper person" for Speaker, returning on the morrow to present the object of their choice "for Her Majesty's Royal approbation."

Thereupon the Commons returned to their own House, to find a notable addition made to the members present. As Erskine May appeared at the bar of the House, leading back the Commons, Gladstone quietly entered from behind the Speaker's chair, and took his place on the front Opposition bench. His entry was so well planned that any demonstration was impossible, he having been in his seat for some minutes before the whisper that told of his presence had gone the full circle of the crowded benches. At the same time Hartington took his seat on the front Opposition bench, which, when Chaplin, the newly-elected Conservative member for Lincolnshire, rose to propose the re-election of Brand as Speaker, was, in addition to the ex-Ministers already mentioned, occupied by Knatchbull-Hugessen, Stansfeld, Lyon Playfair, Campbell Bannerman, Arthur Peel, and James Lowther, Her Majesty's Under-Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs, who sat in the place usually occupied by the leader of the Opposition. On the Treasury bench the Government were represented by W. H. Smith, C. S. Read, Percy Herbert, and Algernon Egerton.

Chaplin discharged himself of his duty with a considerable amount of tact and grace, and his motion for the re-election of Brand found an able seconder in George Cavendish, who spoke from the Liberal side of the House. After a brief pause, Brand rose from his place near Roebuck, and when the cheers

with which he was greeted had subsided, made his acknowledgments of the high honour done him. As he finished, Chaplin stepped forward and offered him his arm, George Cavendish forming an escort on the other side, and, thus supported, the Speaker advanced towards the chair amid renewed cheering, the gentlemen of the House of Commons baring their heads as the procession went by.

Strictly to follow out the prescribed form, the proposer and seconder should have led the Speaker up to the chair. But the difficulties of driving six omnibuses abreast through Temple-bar do not exceed those which would attend the endeavour of three gentlemen to walk abreast between the table of the House of Commons and the Treasury bench. Accordingly when this critical point was reached Chaplin released his charge, and stepped on in front, the Speaker and George Cavendish following in single file. At this moment Lowther, apparently feeling his responsibilities as Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, hastily left the Opposition bench, and, crossing the House, took his seat by Percy Herbert. The Speaker, ascending the steps of the chair, repeated his acknowledgments of the distinction conferred upon him, and besought the assistance of members in carrying out the rules of the House, and preserving order. Percy Herbert having said a few words, as the spokesman of his absent leader, Gladstone appeared at the table of the House. He had, as mentioned, by a strategical movement defeated any possible demonstration that his more public entrance might have evoked. But there were no means of now escaping the outburst of the enthusiasm excited by his presence in the minds of those whom he had so often led from the other side of the House. Cheer after cheer arose from the Liberal benches, and it was some moments before Gladstone found the opportunity to speak.

When it came, he proceeded in a subdued tone and with an unfamiliar manner to add his congratulations to those which had been just officially spoken upon the re-election of Brand. He had brought with him into the House a small walking-cane, with which he toyed throughout the time occupied by the preceding speakers. His hands rested on the top of the stick, whilst in low and deliberate tones he referred to the special qualifications of Brand for the office to which he had been re-elected. But when, in the course of his remarks, he approached the topic of the

desirability of maintaining the continuity of the office of Speaker apart from the question of party or politics, and when he momentarily stepped aside to assail the arguments of any who might hold contrary views, the hands were parted, the right hand uplifted in the old manner, and the House discovered that, whatever rumour might say to the contrary, its former leader was certainly not politically dead, and might not safely be regarded as even sleeping.

Mar. 6.—Swearing in. Both Houses of Parliament met at two o'clock to-day. In the House of Commons the Speaker, in ordinary Court dress and a "bob wig," took his seat at the table, in the place usually occupied by Erskine May. At five minutes past two Black Rod arrived with a summons to the House of Lords, whither the Speaker went, attended by a considerable following of members. The business of the right hon. gentleman was to present himself for Royal approbation in the office to which he had been newly elected, and this was done in accordance with the time-honoured and quaint formula. On returning to the House of Commons, the Speaker took his place in the chair, whence he addressed the Commons, conveying to them the purport of the communication he had just had with the Lords Commissioners, and announcing the Royal confirmation of their choice. He then took the oaths and signed the roll of Parliament, and, retiring for a few minutes, returned in the full dress of the Speaker.

Meanwhile two tables had been brought and added to the length of the ordinary table, and on these were laid copies of the oath and of the Bible. Erskine May read a list of names, and the members indicated, crowding round the table, took the oath and signed the roll in order, being afterwards introduced to the Speaker by May. Chaplin was, after the Speaker, the first member to sign the roll; George Cavendish, the seconder of the motion for the election of the Speaker, signing third.

Apr. 14.—"A good deal has happened in the interval." Bright took the affirmation customary with members of the Society of Friends, but did not take his seat, leaving the chamber immediately after he had subscribed the roll. There was a full House to hear Disraeli's answer to Robert Montagu's question touching the right hon. gentleman's remarks on the

government of Ireland, reported to have been made by him in Buckinghamshire.

"It is some time ago since the observations referred to were made," said Disraeli, in reply, "and," he continued in a low voice, "a good deal has happened in the interval."

The House burst into prolonged laughter at this sally, and a general cheer endorsed the concluding remarks of the Prime Minister, that it would be a very inconvenient matter for the Government to express its opinion upon a subject of such importance in answer to a question. Montagu rose again to press for a more definite reply, and was greeted with cries of "Order! Order!" in which were mingled a few cheers. Newdegate here interposed, and in his most solemn manner appealed to the Speaker to say whether a subject involving the gravest questions of legislation should be submitted to Her Majesty's Ministers at a time when the House had no opportunity of expressing an opinion on it.

The Speaker ruled that Montagu was in order in putting the question, but added that the Prime Minister might decline to answer it. Montagu, amid a scene of some uproar, repeated his request for an answer to his question. Disraeli, with one hand in his waistcoat and the other holding his copy of the "Orders," sat looking up at the ceiling, and as it was evident he had no intention of adding to his remarks, the Speaker introduced M^r Arthur with a question relative to the Fiji Islands.

Mar. 30.—Vote of
Thanks for the
Ashantee Cam-
paign.

Disraeli moved the resolutions conveying "the thanks of the House to Sir Garnet Wolseley, Commodore Commerell, Commodore Hewett, Captain the Hon. E. R. Fremantle, Colonel Festing, Sir Archibald Alison, Captain Glover, and the officers, petty officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the navy, army, and marines engaged in the war against the King of Ashantee." He entered upon a long and detailed sketch of the operations on the Gold Coast, adroitly managing at the outset to separate Garnet Wolseley, whom it was his duty to eulogise, from the late Government, who had selected him to carry out the campaign. Having concluded a somewhat dry review of the events of the campaign, Disraeli, in a few brief sentences, extolled the general character of the

army's achievements, and concluded by moving the vote of thanks.

Gladstone, who was received with loud cheers from the Opposition benches, lost no time in meeting the allegation of the Prime Minister touching the intentions of the late Government in the early days of the campaign. But he did so in a studiously courteous manner, and with an apology for introducing anything of a controversial character into the proceedings. Eardley Wilmot, who was listened to with evident sympathy, thanked Disraeli for a kindly mention of his son, Lieutenant Wilmot, who was killed in action.

Gathorne Hardy made his *début* as Secretary of State for War under the disadvantageous circumstances of rising to speak at the dinner hour, and after the important proceedings noted above. There was a considerable exodus from the House when Gladstone sat down, amongst those who disappeared within ten minutes after the rising of Hardy being the whole of the late Ministry, with the exception of Campbell Bannerman. Hardy occupied upwards of two hours in the exposition of his views, and sat down amid some cheering. The House awakened up considerably under the lively talk of Wilfrid Lawson, who immediately proceeded to move the resolution of which he had given notice for the reduction of the numbers of the army by 10,000 men. Specially enjoyed was his quaint summing up of the material results of the victorious campaign in Ashantee.

"What have we gained," he asked, "by our victories? I don't know that we have anything to show for the expenditure of our blood and treasure except an old umbrella and a treaty."

"No treaty," shouted hon. members.

"Well," retorted Sir Wilfrid, "I am not so very sorry to hear it, for I don't believe the treaty would have been any more valuable than the umbrella."

Apr. 16. — The Conservative Budget. Probably on no occasion has the House of Commons been more crowded than it was to-night, when Stafford Northcote rose to disclose the financial proposals of the Conservative Government. Every seat in the body of the House was occupied, and a little throng stood at the bar. Members filled the double row of seats in the gallery opposite the Treasury bench, some, for lack of better

accommodation, sitting on the steps of the gangway. The only place where seats were unoccupied was the back bench in the gallery opposite, and here an additional score of members would have filled it to overflowing. The various galleries over the clock devoted to the accommodation of strangers more or less distinguished were early filled to their utmost capacity. Amongst other members of the Upper House present were the Earl of Airlie, Lord Stafford, Lord Annesley, Lord Carlingford, and the Earl of Devon, a country neighbour of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Gladstone, who had not been present in the House throughout the week, prolonged his absence over to-night; but Bright was there, taking his seat on the front Opposition bench for the first time this Session. Lowe, Goschen, Childers, Forster, and Stansfeld were amongst the ex-Ministers present. The full strength of the Ministry was displayed on the Treasury bench, Disraeli with his left hand swathed in a black silk bandage, suffering, it was said, from an attack of gout.

When the questions had been put and answered, the Premier rose, and walking down the House faced about at the cross benches on the right-hand side, and stood there a moment or two whilst Stafford Northcote occupied the attention of the Speaker.

"Mr. Disraeli!" said the Speaker, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer had resumed his seat.

"A Message from the Queen" responded the right hon. gentleman, advancing, bowing to the chair, and handing in the document.

As he passed up the House all the members uncovered, and remained with bared heads whilst the Speaker read how the Queen, taking into consideration the momentous services rendered by Sir Garnet Wolseley in planning and conducting the Ashantee campaign, recommended her faithful Commons to grant him a sum of £25,000. Disraeli moved that the Message be referred to the Committee of Supply, and amid a buzz of conversation hats were with one consent replaced.

The buzz of conversation deepened into a cheer and then died away into profound silence, when, just on the stroke of five o'clock, the House having resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Stafford Northcote rose to make his speech.

Sir Stafford resumed his seat at twenty minutes to eight, after having spoken two hours and forty minutes. For the

greater part of that time he, contenting himself with a plain business style of talking, managed to engross the attention of the Committee, though his hold was once or twice imperilled by a tendency to entertain the Committee with those replies to the arguments of deputations on the Budget, which he took credit to himself for refraining from delivering in the presence of the deputations themselves. During one of these somewhat frequent interludes, when he was replying at length to the arguments of the promoters of the repeal of brewers' licences, the House began rapidly to thin. But, on the whole, he succeeded in maintaining the interest of his hearers; and the loud cheers that burst forth as he sat down did not all come from the Conservative benches.

Apr. 23. — Mr. Gladstone criticises the Budget. The appearance of the House of Commons at half-past four betokened a condition of high expectancy. Every seat in the body of the House was appropriated, and members overflowed into the galleries, a double row facing the Opposition benches indicating that the speaker looked for would rise from that side. The gallery over the clock was densely crowded, amongst the numerous peers present being Earl Granville. Both the front Opposition bench and the Treasury bench were filled, a notable addition to the occupants of the former being Gladstone, who has not of late been very constant in his attendance upon the debates. As has been his custom this Session, he sat several seats below the one usually filled by the leader of the Opposition, having Bright on his right hand and Childers on his left. The questions disposed of, Raikes, the Chairman of Committees, brought up the Report of the Budget; whereupon Gladstone rose, and was greeted by loud and prolonged cheering from the Liberal benches.

He commenced by observing that he was not about to enter upon a course of hostile criticism, and this pledge was, throughout a speech extending over three-quarters of an hour, kept, not alone in the general scope of his remarks, but in the manner of making them. He was studiously courteous to "my right hon. friend" Stafford Northcote, and most gentle in the utterance even of the strongest of his criticisms upon the financial policy of a Conservative Government. Stafford Northcote, who

followed, observed that, after such a speech, he felt scarcely called upon for an answer; and forthwith proceeded at great length, and in somewhat wearisome detail, to reply.

Apr. 24. — Mr.
Smollett at-
tacks the late
Premier.

When at five o'clock Smollett rose, in accordance with notice, to call the attention of the House of Commons to "the abrupt dissolution of the late Parliament," and to move a resolution, there was present only such a House as is customary on Friday evenings, when a private member is availing himself of the privilege of airing a grievance on going into Committee of Supply. A quarter of an hour earlier Gregory had, by a speech on probate in England, Scotland, and Ireland, driven the bulk of the members away. But they came flocking back as the news spread through the lobbies that Smollett really was moving his resolution, and that Gladstone was on the Treasury bench taking notes, with the obvious intention of replying.

Smollett set out with the declaration that he was not working in conjunction with any party, nor was he expecting sympathy from either Ministers or the Opposition. The former were, he declared, too well satisfied with the position in which the dissolution had landed them to interpose, and the other too fully impressed with the wisdom of not crying over spilt milk, to complain of "the political madness of Mr. Gladstone," or to bewail their own "condition of political disorganisation." This way of speaking, the plainness of which was considerably augmented by a certain brusqueness of manner, raised a laugh on the Conservative benches. Thus encouraged, Smollett proceeded to indulge in "a short historical retrospect of the Session," the dramatic interest of which he somewhat damaged by declaring at the outset that it was designed to prove that Gladstone had "organised a dissolution in secret, and sprung it upon the House." It was not, he was careful to state, for the sake of the late House of Commons that he was moved to protest. He had not himself belonged to that House, had "never thought much of it," and had even seen it referred to as "an assembly of soap boilers." But the facts did not lessen his indignation against Gladstone and his colleagues, whom, in the course of his speech, he accused of "having, by unworthy, improper, and unconstitutional methods, tried to seize power;"

of having "acted in a manner that was ungenerous to their friends, insolent to their enemies, and to the country at large barely honest;" whose conduct he variously described as "indecent," as "utter wantonness," as a "device," an "artifice," a "plot," a "pious fraud," as "sharp practice more likely to have come from a sharp attorney's office than from a Cabinet of English gentlemen." To account for all of which the most charitable suggestion that offered itself was that "the late Ministry had lost their wits, and were not responsible agents."

To this, members on the Conservative side listened with appreciative laughter and applauding cheers, and only once—when Smollett declared, speaking of Gladstone, that "the stratagem had recoiled on the head of the trickster"—did indignant cries of "Order!" from the Liberal benches interrupt the speaker.

When Smollett sat down, Gladstone half rose from his place, but there appeared a prospect of his speech remaining unspoken. No one had seconded the resolution, and no response came in reply to the Speaker's demand for the name of the seconder. At the second appeal from the chair, however, Whalley came forward, hat in hand, from the obscurity of a corner under the Strangers' Gallery, and said,

"I beg to second it."

A great roar of laughter and cheers followed upon this unexpected apparition. It was some moments before silence was restored, and the Speaker found an opportunity for putting the motion from the chair. Then Gladstone appeared at the table, and was greeted by long and loud cheering from the benches behind him and below the gangway. In tones of grave mockery he declared that, as the motion had been supported by "two such distinguished members" as the proposer and seconder, he felt it his duty to lose no time in replying to it. In the same tone of grave banter, hugely relished by both sides of the House, Gladstone, whilst admitting that Smollett had the support of a name that stood high in historical literature, took exception to the date of the "historical retrospect" which they had listened to. "What he calls history I call romance," said he, and, with a half apology for treating the matter seriously, he proceeded at some length to contradict and disprove the serious allegations "which appeared amid the jokes and the

invective of the hon. member." The main statement, to the effect that the Ministry had early in January determined upon the dissolution announced in the last week of the month, and had secretly informed their supporters of their intention, with the view to their obtaining advantages at the hustings, Gladstone denounced as "not only untrue, but absurd; not only absurd, but impossible." Coming to the passage in which Smollett had stigmatised her Majesty's late Ministers as "tricksters," he, pointing over to the place where Smollett sat, called out, in a loud voice,

"Let the hon. member rise in his place and say whether he still holds to the utterance of the word 'trickster.'"

He paused a moment, and Smollett, standing on his feet, said hurriedly,

"I shall not rise again from my seat."

The House laughed at the "bull," but it became hushed as Gladstone protested his scorn for a man who, when challenged, had "not the decency, had not the manliness, to reply, but took refuge in ignoble silence from the consequence of his act." A prolonged cheer from the Liberal benches followed, and when Gladstone spoke again it was in a quiet, subdued manner. Thenceforward his speech resolved itself into an elaborate defence of the course taken by the Cabinet in dissolving Parliament, and comprised an historically interesting statement of his personal views and feelings in the last critical moments of his Premiership.

When Gladstone had finished, he, amid loud cheers, walked out of the House, and Whalley presented himself, this time from a seat behind the front Opposition bench. His naïve confession, that he had "scarcely read the resolution he had seconded," caused great laughter, which became quite boisterous when he said he was very glad to have the opportunity of commenting upon the inconvenience occasioned to candidates for election and re-election by the suddenness of the dissolution, adding, "It found me in prison." When, finally, Whalley sat down, there was a pause, and all eyes were turned towards the Treasury bench, where Disraeli sat with folded arms and downcast eyes. Showing no signs of intention to interfere in the matter, Sir George Bowyer rose amid deprecatory cries. It transpired that he wanted Smollett to withdraw his resolu-

tion, but the Liberals opposing to his suggestion a determined shout of "No!" the question was formally put from the Chair and negatived.

CHAPTER II.

GERMS OF OBSTRUCTION.

First Appearance of Major O'Gorman—Major O'Gorman on Sunday Closing—The County Franchise Bill—How Acts of Parliament are Drafted—A Breach of Privilege—Lollypops on the Sabbath Day—Taking down his words—Lord Sandhurst—Lord Randolph Churchill and the Irish Members—At the Bar of the House.

Apr. 29. — First Appearance of Major O'Gorman. House discussing question of purchase of Irish railways. When it was believed the debate had finished, it being close on midnight, Major O'Gorman, newly elected for Waterford, rose from a back seat below the gangway. The Major, who is of gigantic stature and burly to boot, stood a few minutes speechless in full view of the House. A titter rose from the Ministerial benches, which broke forth into a roar of laughter when Major O'Gorman suddenly and angrily cried,

"Mr. Speaker!"

When the outburst had partially subsided, the hon. member said he was about to vote against the motion, and could not do it without a word of explanation; the word was that if the English Government got hold of the railways there would not at the end of three weeks be an Irishman in the service of any of the lines. The House laughing again at this hot utterance, he repeated and emphasised his observation by declaring that in three weeks all the Irishmen on the line would be "sent to hell or Connaught." This brought up the Speaker, and Major O'Gorman having, with considerable difficulty, been made to understand that he must temporarily sit down, the right hon. gentleman reminded him that he had "exceeded the usual licence of Parliamentary debate." Major O'Gorman showed a disposition to argue the matter with the Speaker, affirming, amid shouts of laughter, that the expression he had made use of was

"perfectly well known." Finally, he "offered his sincere regret" if he had said what he should not have said, though, he added, "it is perfectly historical."

He then proceeded to observe that he "was not a Hellenist, and need not change his sex and become a Cassandra in order to be able to prophesy that with three weeks of English management the Irish railways would be ruined." Next he volunteered an anecdote. "It's not a bad story," said he; but all the House could make out was a reference to a horse which a Lord Lieutenant was riding with a distinguished man, and was "thrown over his ears." In conclusion, the Major, whilst declaring "his sincerest respect for that most talented young gentleman who had introduced the motion," repeated that he would not be able to vote with him, his maxim being, "On all occasions vote against the introduction of Englishmen to Ireland." Major O'Gorman's remarks brought the debate to a close, and upon a division the motion was negatived by 241 votes against 56.

May 8. — Major
O'Gorman on
Sunday Clos-
ing.

Mr. Richard Smyth, endeavouring to obtain the prohibition of the sale of intoxicating liquors in Ireland on the Sunday, led to the disclosure of a wide difference of opinion on the subject amongst the Irish members. Lord Charles Beresford was specially emphatic in his opposition to the proposal. Hicks Beach declined to adopt the motion on the part of the Government, and an attempt further to carry the discussion was met by cries of "Divide." On Major O'Gorman presenting himself, however, he was received with loud cheers, and was listened to with profound attention, as beginning by addressing the Speaker as "Mr. Chairman," and occasionally lapsing into use of the word "gentlemen!" he warmly opposed the motion.

"For ever let the Heavens fall," said the Major, with hand solemnly uplifted, but "never let it be said that you introduced into Ireland an Act which prevented a poor man going out for a walk on a Sunday—perhaps a hot Sunday, may be a wet Sunday—with his family, and that he could not get a drop of beer, or porter, or whisky. It is creating one law for the rich and another for the poor, and that," he added, sinking back into his seat, "is a thing I never will stand."

When the cheers and laughter which this oration evoked had subsided, the House divided, and the motion was rejected by 201 votes against 110.

May 13. — The County Franchise Bill. The second reading of the Household Franchise (Counties) Bill moved by Trevelyan in a clever speech, a considerable portion of which was addressed personally to Disraeli, who, unfortunately, was not present to hear it. Salt moved the rejection of the Bill, not so much on the ground of actual hostility to its principle, as because he believed the time was not opportune for the suggested reform. Burt supported the motion in an able maiden speech, brief, but weighty in argument, delivered with a considerable degree of natural grace, and losing nothing by the curiously broad dialect in which it was spoken. Newdegate was unusually moved by the proposal further to amend the representative system, and declared in sad, slow tones, that Trevelyan was one of those who think

“The Constitution was intended
For nothing else but to be mended.”

Forster congratulated Trevelyan upon the fact that the extension of the franchise in counties was now reduced to a mere question of time. For his own part, he believed it had become a pressing question, and it was high time it was settled. In an eloquent and warmly spoken passage, he declared that the reason why England had advanced by means of reform instead of revolution was because new social powers as they rose were taken within the precincts of the Constitution, and made a portion of it. Such a new power was the agricultural labourer, who had been deaf and dumb, but who, thanks to a cheap press, and to extended means of education, could now hear and speak. Murmurs from the Ministerial benches had formed a running commentary upon this declaration; but when Forster referred to Arch as “that eminent man,” and expressed a desire, in the interests of the Legislature and the country, that he were sitting in the House of Commons, Conservative indignation burst forth in derisive laughter and emphatic shouts of “No, no!”

Disraeli, who had entered the House whilst Salt was speaking, rose at four o'clock, the House being densely crowded, and

was received with loud cheers. He spoke in his quietest manner, till he came to refer in sarcastic terms to the "passionate fervour" with which Forster had addressed the House, and to the "look of severe scrutiny" with which he had regarded him (the Premier) when he touched on the question of land tenure. Roused by the cheers and laughter these personal thrusts elicited from Conservatives, Disraeli proceeded with increased animation to "look at the question in a more business-like way." His "great objection," disclosed in the course of his remarks, was that it was not possible, or at least not desirable, to enfranchise large bodies of the people without at the same time revising the distribution of political power. A deep silence fell over the Conservative benches when the Premier declared that in all such revisions the country had been approaching the system of electoral districts, and that in all future changes of a similar character further approaches must be made in the same direction. But the cheering recommenced when the right hon. gentleman, whilst acknowledging the inevitableness of the consequence, declared, though in comparatively mild terms, his personal objection to be an agent in hastening its approach, and cited figures to show that it would, when it came, strike a fatal blow at the system of borough representation.

After some words from Trevelyan the House divided, and the Bill was rejected by 287 votes against 173, the announcement of the majority being hailed by loud cheering from the Conservative side.

May 14. — How Gladstone, on his way to the Royal banquet at Windsor, looked in and remained for an hour on the front Opposition bench, the centre of a continually changing group of old colleagues and friends. Disraeli was not present during the evening, and the House generally was unusually empty, there being but little attraction in a list of orders of the day. The House gave up the greater portion of the night to consideration of the Juries Bill.

In the course of the debate a curious instance occurred of the lax manner in which Acts of Parliament are drafted. Clause 5 of the Bill provides for the total exemption from service on juries of (amongst other persons) "all peers, members of Parlia-

ment, and judges, all serjeants, barristers-at-law," &c. In the scrutiny which the Bill had undergone at the hands of private members, the closeness of which was testified to by eight pages of amendments, it apparently had not occurred to any one that the term "all serjeants" included certain policemen, soldiers, marines, and others, whom it certainly was not the intention of the Legislature to exempt from service on juries. At the last moment, just as the clause was after long discussion being put to the vote, Thompson pointed out the error, and, amid some laughter, the phrase was amended by the addition of the words "at law."

May 18. — A H. Herbert immediately gained the attention of the House when, rising after the questions had been disposed of, he claimed a brief hearing on a matter of privilege. It appeared that a breach of privilege had, in his opinion, been committed by the *Morning Post*, inasmuch as it had published a paragraph assigning to the Speaker the utterance of certain strictures upon recent Parliamentary manifestations, and had, on another occasion, published an inaccurate statement relating to the sittings of Select Committees. The Speaker replied very briefly and pointedly that he had seen the first communication referred to, and had not thought it worth contradicting, and with respect to the latter he pointed out that hon. members had for reference an official record in the "Votes," which were supplied to them each morning, and need not be misled by statements in a newspaper.

May 19. — Lolly- In the House of Commons P. A. Taylor introduced a resolution for the opening of museums, libraries, and similar institutions, on Sundays.

pope on the
Sabbath Day.
In a racy speech, which kept together a large House, he reviewed the arguments it had been the custom to oppose to the movement, and, referring to the manner in which hostile petitions were got up, cited the declaration of a clergyman who, writing on the subject, observed, "But, you know, religious people are so unscrupulous, as a rule." A great deal of amusement was excited by his dramatic reading of the report of a recent meeting of Scotch elders, when the question under discussion was whether "walking on the Sunday" was a practice

worthy of the seal of their approval. The House was, in particular, deeply moved by the repetition of a story told to his class by a clergyman, touching "a little boy who broke the Sabbath by eating lollypops." The lollypops stuck in the little boy's throat, and choked him, so that he died.

Allen, who moved as an amendment that it was not desirable to open the museums on Sundays, was not so fortunate in gaining the ear of the House, his remarks, after a brief interval, being received very impatiently, and the occasional pauses, arising from his losing himself amid a pile of papers which he had on the seat behind him, were filled up by loud cries of "Divide!" M'Arthur, who seconded the amendment, was received with still louder cries of deprecation, which, as in the case of Allen, came chiefly from below the gangway on the Conservative side. The motion was rejected by 271 votes against 68.

May 20. — Tak-
ing down his
words.

The equanimity, not to say the dulness, of the afternoon's proceedings was varied by a "scene" which took place between two Irish members during the brief discussion on the Public Meetings (Ireland) Bill. Conolly, in supporting Dr. Ball's amendment for the rejection of the Bill, observed that there was "nothing illegal or unconstitutional" the Home Rule party would shrink from in order to compass their ends. Thereupon, Butt, jealous for the dignity and decorum of Parliamentary debate, interposed, and moved "that the words be taken down." Conolly promptly apologised, and offered to withdraw the obnoxious expressions; but Butt was inexorable in pressing his motion, and the Speaker ruling that in such case the words must be taken down, this was done amid solemn silence. Conolly then proceeded, apologising for the use of the objectionable words, and expressing the same view in other and more strictly Parliamentary terms.

May 21. — Lord
Sandhurst.

When, a few minutes after five o'clock, Anderson rose to move a vote of censure on the Commander of the Forces in Ireland, the House of Commons was crowded in every part. There was not a vacant seat on the floor of the House; the galleries on either side had their rows

of members, and the Peers', Speaker's, and Strangers' Galleries were all filled. Lord Hampton, better known as Sir John Pakington, took his seat in the Peers' Gallery during question time, but left before five o'clock. Lord Skelmersdale, Viscount Monck, Lord Wolverton, Lord Chelmsford, Lord O'Hagan, and the Earl of Bradford were among the peers who, from time to time, dropped in and filled up the gallery. Gladstone took his seat shortly after half-past four, and remained for an hour.

Disraeli, having moved that the orders of the day be postponed till "the motion relating to the Army (Lord Sandhurst)" was disposed of, Anderson rose, and was received in absolute silence. This was presently broken by laughter and ironical cheering, when, referring to the terms in which the Premier had the other night alluded to the motion, he declared that he did not charge Lord Sandhurst with corrupt practices. Corrupt practice, he explained, implied corrupt motive, and he did not allege that on the part of his lordship. The outburst which greeted this introductory passage was the first and last hostile demonstration made in the course of the speech; and as Anderson proceeded, in studiously temperate language, to set forth his indictment, the House assumed an aspect of profound attention.

The specific charges against Lord Sandhurst were that he had been absent from duty for seventeen months out of thirty-four, and that he had during that period received pay and allowances contrary to the regulations laid down in the Queen's Warrant relating to the pay of staff officers. The principal features of the case appeared in a digest of a correspondence which had passed between Lord Sandhurst and the War Office, resulting in his lordship's returning nearly £900, received in the way of pay as Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Ireland, and for remittances of portions of which his receipt had been furnished by the gumming on to the pay-sheet of his signature, written on a separate piece of paper, his lordship being at the time in the south of France.

On Anderson sitting down, after speaking for three-quarters of an hour, Gathorne Hardy rose from the Treasury bench, and, declaring that he did not appear there as the advocate of Lord Sandhurst, urged that throughout the whole transaction his

lordship had acted openly and in perfect good faith, believing that he was entitled to the pay he had accepted during the period of his absence from Ireland, a considerable portion of which was accounted for by his attendance upon Parliamentary duties, and by his being summoned to the War Office for consultation with Cardwell on the details of the Army Purchase Bill.

Hitherto the debate had proceeded with a certain degree of solemnity on the part of the House. But the rising of Horsman changed all that. The right hon. gentleman, after some prefatory remarks of a general and judicial character, which left his hearers in doubt as to which side he was about to declare for, suddenly turned towards the gentlemen sitting on the crowded front Opposition bench, and denounced them as the authors of the whole mischief, to which they had been moved by the shabbiest and dirtiest of reasons. They had, when in office, made the greatest possible use of Lord Sandhurst in respect of the Army Purchase Bill. While the Bill was passing through the Commons, Cardwell had called Sir William Mansfield to his counsels, and when the Bill reached the Lords they had made him a peer in order that he might further help them there. These duties had, of course, brought him to London, and then, "in order to reduce the estimates and swell the surplus," they had, with pistol at his head, "extorted from him" these sums of money, which he was said to have "returned." These observations drew forth rapturous cheering from the Conservative benches; and the House, having again found its voice, used it to protest against Reginald Yorke's proposed interposition in the debate. The hon. member rose with a portentous bundle of notes in his hand, and admitted that he "had intended to go through a few points in the correspondence between Lord Sandhurst and the War Office." But the inclination of the House being decidedly adverse to hearing him at all, Yorke, after some vain struggling, sat down, and Campbell-Bannerman presented himself at the table.

Like Gathorne Hardy, the ex-Financial Secretary to the War Office was suffering from a severe cold. His observations, therefore, were brief, but manifestly, in the view of the majority of the House, they conclusively disposed of Horsman's statements. If the late Government had acted from shabby and

dirty motives of economy, Campbell-Bannerman said, then his Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief and the Adjutant-General must be supposed to have been actuated by the same desires, for no step in the proceedings had been taken by the War Office without consulting them, and receiving the seal of their approval. As for the pistol-at-the-head performance, in order to extort the money from Lord Sandhurst to swell the surplus, the fact was that the money returned by his lordship had been paid over to the officers who had in his absence performed his duties; and finally, if it were true that the late Government had made Lord Sandhurst a peer in order that he might help them through the Lords with the Army Purchase Bill, all Campbell-Bannerman could say was that they were very unfortunate in the speculation, for when his lordship had taken part in the debates in the other House, he had spoken against the Bill. Recurring to the matter actually before the House, he declared, amid general cheering, that there was no imputation on the character of Lord Sandhurst, and expressed the hope that Anderson would withdraw his motion, which he did.

May 22. — Lord
Randolph
Churchill and
the Irish mem-
bers.

Considering to-day the expediency of the selection of Oxford as a military centre, Brooks suddenly interposing with the remark, "As chief magistrate of the city of Dublin, I trust the House will allow me to make a few remarks," was greeted with shouts of laughter. But it appeared that Brooks did not mean to claim in these words a *locus standi* in the debate as far as it related to the subject matter, but merely for the purpose of hurling back at the feet of Lord Randolph Churchill "a slander upon the Irish members," which he understood the noble lord to have uttered in the course of his remarks.

Later in the debate, Meldon, another Irish member, appeared as the champion of Dublin University, upon which, it appeared, the noble lord had levied "a sneer." Meldon wished him and the House generally to understand that, just as Dublin was "far away a better and a finer city than Oxford," so Dublin University, at which Meldon himself had graduated, was "intellectually and physically" a greater institution than Oxford University.

June 1.—At the Bar of the House. Parliament met to-day after the Whitsuntide recess, and members of the House of Commons whom zeal for the public service had led to their places in the first hour of the reunion were recompensed by witnessing two incidents of rare occurrence. The Speaker took the chair shortly after four o'clock, and was scarcely seated when O'Donnell, who was member for Galway when the House adjourned, advanced to the bar, and, bowing to the Speaker, asked permission to raise a question of privilege. The Speaker replied to the "hon. member" that he had received a report from Mr. Justice Lawson, the judge appointed to try the petition against his return for Galway, from which he learnt that O'Donnell was disqualified from sitting in the House, and that consequently he was not entitled to address it. Bowing again in the same dramatic manner that had distinguished his carriage throughout, O'Donnell said—

"I obey, sir, but I shall appeal," and disappeared.

The Speaker then made to the House the communication which O'Donnell had desired to preface, informing it that Galway was at the moment minus one representative, O'Donnell having, by the judgment of Mr. Justice Lawson, been unseated for corrupt practices. Later still, Conolly gave notice with reference to the borough of Galway that when the question of the issue of a new writ came before the House, he should move that the borough be disenfranchised, at least to the extent of one-half of its representation.

The questions were unusually few in number, and, having been disposed of, the House proceeded to read the Orders of the Day, the first of which directed the attendance at the bar of Mr. R. S. France. Mr. France's alleged offence was that he had committed a breach of the privileges of the House by writing to the Chairman of the Committee on Explosives a letter in which he imputed to him an unfair exercise of his office with respect to calling witnesses. The order being read from the table, Sir John Hay, the member whose conduct was impugned, moved that Mr. France be called in. Thereupon Forsyth rose with a paper in his hand, and commencing with the remark, "Mr. France is one of my constituents," was examining the paper through his glasses, when he was informed by an angry cry of "Order, order," that the

Speaker was on his feet waiting an opportunity of making a remark. Forsyth hastily sat down, and it appeared that the Speaker had interposed for the purpose of putting John Hay's motion formally before the House. This done, Forsyth rose again, and commencing exactly as before, with the remark—

"Mr. France is one of my constituents——" the House laughed heartily in acknowledgment of his anxious desire to indicate the precise grounds upon which he had been led to appear in the matter. Forsyth proceeded to say that Mr. France had placed in his hand a document with the request that he would read it to the House.

"It is long," he added, apologetically, "and the first portion of it is irrelevant; but as Mr. France wishes it read, I will, with the permission of the House, read it."

Mr. France was not very fortunate in the reader he had engaged; but the House speedily discovered, even under the low, monotonous intoning of Forsyth, that the statement, though certainly long, was decidedly not irrelevant. Whilst declaring the writer's desire "cheerfully to apologise" if it were considered that he had in any way appeared to reflect upon the honour of Sir John Hay, or the dignity of the House of Commons, it reiterated and insisted upon Mr. France's original allegation that the interests of trade, and "even the safety of the country," had been imperilled by legislation which practically "prohibited the use of all explosives except the one in which the Government adviser held a pecuniary interest."

Forsyth added a few words of commentary, and concluded by moving that the order for Mr. France's attendance be discharged. But the House was not to be thus deprived of the little excitement it had promised itself on an otherwise dull evening. A general cry of "No" was raised, and no one coming forward to second Forsyth's amendment, it fell to the ground, and Disraeli, amid profound silence, approached the table. The right hon. gentleman started by observing that the case was "a very simple one," but his summary of it indicated that, possibly owing to Forsyth's halting speech and unemphatic reading, he at least had not comprehended it.

"Mr. France has not appeared in answer to the summons of the House," said the Premier, in his most solemn tones. "He has sent here a document to be read, which, it appears to me,

rather aggravates his position, and it is our duty to insist upon his attendance."

This brought up Forsyth again with the hurried explanation that Mr. France was in attendance, and, in fact, was waiting the House's pleasure to call him in.

Lord Charles Russell, the Serjeant-at-Arms, in obedience to the resolution agreed to by the House, then went out to bring in the accused. In the meanwhile one of the attendants advanced from under the doorway, and drew out from either side of the gangway portions of a something which resembled a huge brass telescope. These, when joined together midway, proved to be the concrete form of the "Bar of the House," upon which the now crowded assembly gazed with undisguised awe. Presently, Lord Charles Russell returned with his prisoner, who, evidently well schooled in the ceremonial of the part he had to play, stopped short at the black bar drawn across the matting on the floor, and bowed to the Speaker.

"Are you the writer of the letter to Sir John Hay?" said the Speaker.

"Yes, sir," replied Mr. France, withdrawing his gaze from the stained-glass windows, through which the afternoon sun was shining, lighting up the motto, "*Dieu et mon droit*," written in old English letters twice under each window.

In reply to further curt questioning, Mr. France briefly replied that he had sent a copy of the letter to each member of the Committee, and that he had no explanation to offer other than that which had been read by Forsyth. He was then ordered to withdraw, the House, hitherto decorously solemn, relieving itself by a burst of laughter as soon as Mr. France had dexterously moved backward out at the folding-doors that lead into the lobby.

The bar was shut up again, and an awkward silence ensued. The members looked at John Hay, and John Hay looked down at the occupants of the Treasury bench. The Premier held a hasty consultation with Cross, Stafford Northcote, and W. H. Smith, and finally, slowly rising once more, approached the table. His tones were, if possible, a shade deeper than before, and his manner was decidedly graver, as he declared that "the conduct of the gentleman had not been satisfactory," and that the only thing that would appease the injured honour of the

House of Commons was that Mr. France should be called in and admonished by the Speaker.

"Let Mr. France be called," said the Speaker, and once more the Serjeant-at-Arms left the House, once more the attendant advanced and drew out the telescopic apparatus, and once more Mr. France appeared on the edge of the black line on the matting, and resumed his survey of the architectural beauties of the House, apparently at the very window where he had left off. No printed words can convey an adequate impression of the stern, solemn manner, in which the admonition fell, syllable by syllable, from the lips of the Speaker. When he concluded, Mr. France bowed as before, and again safely effected his backward exit through the folding-doors.

Now that it seemed to be all over, the House laughed unrestrainedly; but Whitwell sobered it by a simple question. Disraeli, in completion of his duty, moved that the proceedings be entered upon the records of the House, whereupon Whitwell asked whether the statement read by Forsyth would also appear upon the records, the effect of such a proceeding being, as he pointed out, that a heavy charge against a Government official, "which required instant correction or retraction," would be perpetuated by the act of the House itself. This was a serious dilemma, and appeared to leave Mr. France a decided gainer by the whole transaction. But there was no help for it, the Speaker ruled; and so the letter and the discussion were ordered to be entered in the official report of the proceedings of Parliament, and the crowded House dispersed, leaving Torrens talking to a small residuum on the grievances of army officers who are compelled to retire on half-pay.

CHAPTER III.

MAJOR O'GORMAN.

Major O'Gorman relates a Parable—"Big Ben" on the Navy—"Not on the Side of the Spirits"—Mr. Plimsoll's Shipping Bill—Mr. Gladstone on Church Patronage—Sir W. Harcourt attacks Mr. Gladstone—"Mass in Masquerade"—Prince Leopold's Annuity—A *Mot* by Mr. Lowe—Skulking behind the Chair—A Master of Jeers and Flouts and Sneers—The Major on the Rampage—The New Ministry.

June 12.—Major O'Gorman relates a parable. In the House of Commons, after the questions had been disposed of, Newdegate succeeded in bringing on his motion relating to Conventual Institutions in Great Britain. Early in the Session he had given notice of his intention to bring in a Bill on the subject, but last week, acknowledging the impossibility of succeeding in getting his Bill through, he moved that the order for the second reading be discharged, and substituted a resolution declaring "the expediency" of the Government's introducing a Bill appointing Commissioners to inquire into Monastic and Conventual Institutions in Great Britain. There was a moderately full House when, rising at the favourable hour of a quarter to five, he opened his arguments. The speech differed very little from that which the House has heard year after year under similar circumstances, though the depression of manner under which Newdegate laboured was perhaps a few degrees more marked. This feeling of melancholy was communicated to the House, and it was with something of relief that, when the speech had proceeded for half an hour, George Bowyer's voice was heard giving an emphatic denial to a statement Newdegate was making in reference to a lady of title, whose case he alleged was one which proved the necessity for such legislation as he advocated. Owing to Newdegate's fearfully mysterious manner, and especially to his habit of lowering his voice at the end of his sentences, and finishing them in an impressive whisper, it was not easy to follow him

through the story. But whatever it was, there was no doubt that Bowyer gave it the most emphatic denial.

O'Connor Power, a young member whom Mayo has recently sent to the House, delivered a speech which, though very brief, and made under the disadvantageous circumstance of the presence of an audience impatient of further detention, sufficed to show that the House has gained a recruit of high promise. Greene was scarcely heard amid the din of the cries for a division; but when he sat down, and from the familiar back seat below the gangway, on the opposite side, the spacious figure of Major O'Gorman presented itself, the impatience vanished, and an air of profound attention reigned upon the crowded benches and at the bar thronged with members awaiting the division.

As usual, Major O'Gorman stood silent for a few seconds, and abruptly commenced with a thunder-toned "Sir." He was not long in informing the expectant House upon which side he ranged himself. He was "utterly opposed altogether" to the appointment of "these Royal Commissioners;" and why? He would tell them why. Supposing one of these Royal Commissioners went to a convent and summoned thunderously at the door. The door opens, a lady appears, and the Commissioner asks her what are her station and quality.

"Sir," she would reply, "I will tell you. My sire, sir, was a king; my mother was the daughter of the sixth James of Scotland and the first James of England. His mother, sir, was Queen Regent of Scotland——"

But here the House—which had commenced to laugh when the Major, deepening his tones to represent those of a lady, began, "My sire, sir"—utterly lost the somewhat intricate thread of relationship in which the allegorical nun, questioned by a Royal Commissioner supposed to have been appointed under Newdegate's auspices, had become involved. Matters got worse as O'Gorman, still preserving the character of the nun, an idea to which his colossal figure and tremendous voice lent special effect, proceeded—

"Sir, I had a brother." The brother having, like either the nun's father or mother—it was not clear which—been "murdered," the Major took a fresh breath, and continued, in profounder tones—

"Sir, I have a sister." It was some minutes before the

roar of laughter which this fresh circumstance in the nun's family history awoke had so far subsided as to afford an opportunity for the Major to continue. When it came, the climax of the scene was reached.

"Her name was Sophia," added the Major.

The laughter now grew uncontrollable, and it was almost in dumb-show that he brought the allegory to a conclusion. But even the gestures were eloquent, as, with hands clasped and held up towards the roof, he gave a highly dramatic representation of the wicked Royal Commissioner, who, having first fled from the presence of the nun, and "covered his wretched head with sackcloth and ashes," "prayed to the immortal gods" for pardon.

"And," said the Major, fervently, as he dropped down in his seat, "I hope he may obtain it."

After this there was of course no more speaking, and, the House dividing, Newdegate's resolution was rejected by 237 votes against 94.

June 13. — "Big Ben" on the navy.

House in Committee on Navy Estimates to-night. Bentinck, of West Norfolk, commonly known as "Big Ben," to distinguish himself from his kinsman, the Judge Advocate-General, has discovered in himself a capacity for naval criticism likely to prove fatal to some of the older and, bodily, weaker officials of the House who are compelled to sit and listen to him. He is up on all possible occasions, and on some which were in advance fondly regarded as impossible. It is "our reserve," or rather the absence of our reserve, which is troubling the soul of Bentinck.

"Where is your reserve?" he asks, bending his beetling brows, and, out of old habit, addressing himself to Goschen. "Why, you've got no reserve; and where will you be supposing a war breaks out to-morrow?"

Sometimes a Minister or an ex-Minister deprecatingly places a few facts at Bentinck's disposal in answer to his question, and the House thinks the matter is settled. But, alas! on the first succeeding opportunity Bentinck presents himself with the same piece of paper in his left hand, the same beetling brows, and the same terrible inquiry, provokingly put as though it were being propounded for the first time—

"Where is your reserve? Why, you've got no reserve; and where will you be supposing a war breaks out to-morrow?"

June 22. — "Not on the side of the spirits." On the motion for the third reading of the Licensing Bill, Wilfrid Lawson moved its rejection. He was, by comparison, less successful than usual in eliciting the laughter of the House, but he made a great hit by his description of the masterly manner in which the Premier had avoided committing himself to the side of the publicans during the controversy on the present and preceding Licensing Acts.

"The right hon. gentleman once said," he remarked, "that he was on the side of the angels, but he never said he was on the side of the spirits."

He would, however, Wilfrid Lawson thought, be obliged to declare himself that night, it being the occasion of the third reading of the first and foremost measure of his Government. In a speech of unusual bitterness, Goschen, who followed, sarcastically begged Wilfrid Lawson of his mercy not to persist in his attempt to throttle at its birth the first weak offspring of a strong Government and a victorious party. The Home Secretary had, after putting the Bill through all possible facings, succeeded in passing a measure which was as nearly identical with the Act of 1872 as public decency permitted. It would go up to the House of Lords followed by very little enthusiasm and no respect, and Goschen urged that it should be allowed to pass "with contemptuous acquiescence."

June 24. — Mr. Plimsoll's Shipping Bill. Plimsoll moved the second reading of his Merchant Shipping Bill. Charles Adderley replied warmly and in a somewhat personal tone to Plimsoll's imputations upon the Board of Trade, observing, amongst other pleasant things, that, in order to pass a Bill through Parliament, it was necessary to have a head as well as a heart, and, whilst admitting the goodness of Plimsoll's heart, he plainly intimated his doubts as to his possession of the other qualification. More distinctly than any preceding speaker the President of the Board of Trade denounced the Bill.

After the division, an apprehension seemed to exist that the majority had declared for the second reading of the Bill.

Rowland Winn, after looking at the paper, handed it over towards Plimsoll, who, amid loud cheering, glanced at it, advancing towards the right to lead the tellers up to the table. But on looking again at the figures, he returned the paper, and Winn, amid a slight cheer from the Ministerialists, answered by loud cheers from the Opposition, read out the figures which announced the narrow majority by which the Bill had been rejected. John Hay was one amongst a considerable number of Conservatives who voted against the Government.

July 6. — Mr. Gladstone on Church patronage. Gladstone, making one of his still rare appearances, delivered a lively speech in opposition to the Scotch Church Patronage Bill. He had quietly entered at half-past four, whilst the questions were proceeding, and had been in his seat for some time before the discovery of his presence spread through the House. Consequently no demonstration had greeted his unaccustomed arrival. But now, when he stood at the table in full view of the House, a ringing cheer of welcome came from the Liberal benches, and for some moments prevented him from commencing his speech. Gladstone's opposition to the Bill proved to be uncompromising.

"It is not possible to make it acceptable by alterations in Committee," he said, "unless the initiative be boldly and liberally taken by the authors."

As it stood it was a crude, a premature, and an insufficiently considered Bill, which, should it become law, might, and probably would, lead to the fierce lighting up of the latent fire of religious warfare in Scotland. The House had been only moderately full during the early part of the debate, but as the news of Gladstone's speech spread through the lobbies members came flocking in, speedily filling up the empty seats and even thronging the gallery that faced him. The right hon. gentleman, who seemed in excellent health, spoke a little over an hour, with all his old vigour. More than once interruptions from the Conservative benches, of a kind to which more constant speakers from the front Opposition bench have now grown accustomed, checked the flow of Gladstone's speech, and led to some lively episodes, out of which Orr-Ewing, in particular, came not with flying colours. A burst of ironical cheering following

upon Gladstone's incidental declaration that he "was not an idolater of Church Establishment," he turned aside from his argument, and with some warmth observed that if the cheer covered a reference to the part he had played in the disestablishment of the Irish Church, he begged leave to say that if he were to be judged by posterity at all, he should be content if he were to be tried solely for his participation in that work. Loud cheers from the full ranks of the Liberals followed this declaration.

Disraeli rose at half-past eleven, and in a speech tinged with an extraordinary degree of bitterness, manifested not less in manner than in phrase, attacked Gladstone, and parenthetically defended the Bill. By placing in his mouth words that he had not uttered, the Premier constructed, by way of peroration, a joke about Gladstone's tombstone, which drew forth from the Liberal benches a long, low cry of "Oh!"

July 9.—Sir William Harcourt attacks Mr. Gladstone.

The House presented a very animated appearance when, at a quarter to five, the Public Worship Regulation Bill was called on. It was more crowded than it has been on any occasion since the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors was the subject of discussion. Nearly all the Ministers were in their places, and the front Opposition benches were also crowded, Gladstone being prominent amongst their occupants. In the Strangers' and the Speaker's Galleries there was a large number of clergymen, the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Gloucester occupying seats in the gallery set apart for peers. The moving of the second reading of the Bill was preceded by the ceremony of presenting petitions for and against it, Beresford Hope leading off with a considerable bundle directed against the Bill, and Newdegate walking down to the table, amid cheers and laughter, with an equally portentous parcel containing petitions in its favour. Other members, also bearing petitions, followed in large numbers, it being fully ten minutes before the list was exhausted.

Russell Gurney was greeted with cheers on rising to move the second reading of the Bill, which he did for the most part in moderate manner and unimpassioned tones. Cheers coming from both sides of the House testified to the rupture of the

ordinary division lines of party effected by the introduction of the Bill, sections of Liberals and sections of Conservatives vying with each other in cheering such passages, for example, as that in which the Recorder protested against clergymen enjoying emoluments derived from the State, whilst they refused to obey the law of the land. Later Gladstone rose, and was received without any sign of feeling. He spoke for an hour, sitting down amid loud cheering.

At half-past ten Harcourt rose, and in a trenchant speech criticised Gladstone's line of argument, and defended the Bill. Gladstone's proposals he called "a dangerous doctrine of optional conformity," and drew forth loud cheers by declaring that the Church of England is founded upon acts of uniformity, and to raise at this time of day the question of uniformity is fatal to the existence of the National Church. Gathorne Hardy, indicating in the opening sentences of his speech a feeling of hostility to the Bill, was met by such a noisy demonstration of disapproval from a body of members sitting on the Ministerial benches that he was fain to pause and appeal for the courtesy of a hearing.

Later, in the course of his remarks, he was subject to an interruption of a kind much more unusual. A large cat suddenly appeared in the middle of the floor, coming out from the region between the Treasury bench and the Clerk's table, and, being greeted by a sort of "view halloa," darted straight at the seats in the corner below the gangway by the cross-bench on the Conservative side, and, leaping in amid the cluster of startled members, disappeared over their shoulders.

Hubbard came next, and presently chancing to stoop down to take a glass of water, Childers, under the impression that he had brought his remarks to a conclusion, jumped up, and moved the adjournment of the debate. Hubbard's reappearance, with the glass of water and the evident intention of continuing his speech, was greeted with loud laughter.

July 18. — "The mass in masquerade."

All night on resumed debate on Public Worship Regulation Bill. Disraeli, whilst expressing his respect for the religious views of Roman Catholics when acted upon in avowedly Roman Catholic ritual, energetically protested against their adoption by men who had

entered into solemn contract with the nation that they would resist them.

"What I do object to," he said, amid cheers from both sides, "is mass in masquerade."

July 20.—Prince Leopold's annuity. Disraeli, in accordance with Parliamentary etiquette, presented himself at the bar, and exclaiming, "A Message from the Queen," marched up to the table and handed in a document to the Speaker. The Message, on being read from the Chair, proved to be one recommending to the consideration of the faithful Commons the necessity of making a provision for Prince Leopold, now of age. Disraeli then gave notice that on Thursday he would move to take the "gracious Message" into consideration, an announcement which, like the reading of the Message, was received by the House in frigid silence.

July 20.—A *mot* by Mr. Lowe. Lowe said a happy thing to-night. It was on the Endowed Schools Bill. Referring to Sandon's expression that he had "carefully fenced himself" against being understood to pass unfriendly criticism upon the Endowed Schools Commissioners, Lowe observed that, in his opinion, "there had been in the noble lord's speech much more of railing than of fencing."

July 22.—Skulking behind the chair. Greene rising to make some observations on the Public Worship Bill, a cry of "Divide!" burst forth, amid which Mundella, springing up, called the Chairman's attention to the circumstance of an official of the Crown (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck) "skulking behind the Speaker's" chair, and shouting "Divide!" The Chairman thus appealed to replied, amid cheers, that, however reprehensible the practice described might be, Mundella had exceeded Parliamentary usage in the language in which he described it.

Aug. 5.—A master of jeers and flouts and sneers. Discussing the Appropriation Bill, Harcourt complained of some strong language used in the other House by the Marquis of Salisbury. The Premier, in a somewhat apologetic tone, said that his noble colleague was a master of the art of jeers and flouts

and sneers, and, on the whole, indicated his opinion that the House might safely pass by the remarks of the noble marquis as those of a gentleman who occasionally permitted himself to be led away by a faculty for saying smart and bitter things.

Gladstone disputed Harcourt's reading of the bearing of Salisbury's remark, and in some sharp passages, much relished by the House, replied to his former colleague's personal attack by pointedly sarcastic criticisms upon his legal, ecclesiastical, and Parliamentary erudition.

July 30. — The Disraeli was in his place at two o'clock this afternoon, albeit it was after three this morning when he left the House. Ministers had made up their minds for the worst last night, and shortly after midnight a cheerful supper was spread in one of the private rooms, and grilled bones were served hot and hot up to three o'clock. Disraeli himself thoroughly entered into the fun of the thing, and The O'Gorman had during the progress of the struggle no more appreciative observer than the Premier.

Permission had been given to The O'Gorman by the leaders of the party to make a speech if the Government persisted in including the Coercion Act in the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill. The major duly delivered his speech—the head or tail of which no one could discover—and sat down, it being understood that he had accomplished his mission. But, like a tame tiger that has once tasted an infant, The O'Gorman, having tasted the delights of the cheers and laughter his manifestations never fail to draw from the House, grew perfectly unmanageable, and finally ran away with the whole Irish team.

Up to midnight the debate had been decorous and even dull, but about that hour the major began to grow restless, and his deep voice was occasionally heard rolling through the smoke of the debate, like field-guns fired amid the rattle of rifles. It was Butt's defection that set him off at last. An aggravating repetition of the motions to report progress led Butt to say angrily and audibly to his faithful party that he would next time vote against them. And he was as good as his word. He voted in the same lobby with the Ministers, and on his return Mr. Biggar moved that the Chairman do leave the chair.

Biggar is distinguished by a chronic hoarseness of voice, which, earlier in the evening, had drawn forth a protest from the Speaker, who begged him not to talk to himself, but to address the Chair. He also has a habit, when he desires to catch the Speaker's eye, of holding out his hat at arm's length, and shaking it as if he were hailing a cab. On this occasion his hat was discovered violently waving over the bench just behind that on which were the ex-Ministers. Biggar had got down there to be nearer the Speaker, and so insure his hearing him when he moved his motion. Butt was sitting next him, and as soon as he had resumed his seat the member for Limerick rose, and, in hotly-spoken but well-chosen words, denounced Biggar as an enemy to the true interests of Ireland. It was now that The O'Gorman came to the front. Whilst Butt was speaking the major suddenly burst forth into a violent burst of hissing, which Parliamentary sound he presently changed for shouts of "No! no!" "Oh! oh!" "Ah!" and other interruptions, all uttered in a voice the like of which for volume has never had its equal in the House of Commons.

Such general approval of Butt's sentiments was expressed that Biggar shrank from insistence upon his motion, and it would have fallen through but for The O'Gorman, who, with hands clasped across his capacious stomach, hat firmly pressed down over his eyes, and a preternaturally stern expression on his face, insisted upon a division.

"The question is," said the Chairman, "that this motion be by leave withdrawn. I think the ayes have it."

"The noes have it," roared the major.

"I think the ayes have it," mildly persisted the Chairman.

"The noes have it," bellowed the major amid roars of laughter.

In vain A. M. Sullivan, M'Carthy Downing, and others went up to him and implored him to desist. At other times he is mild as a lamb, and most exemplary in his obedience to orders; but the blood of The O'Gormans was up, and to all entreaties the major announced, with increasing fierceness—

"The noes have it."

There was no help for it, and so the House was cleared for the division, and presently, amid shouts of laughter, The O'Gorman, who is considerably bigger than the Claimant, walked up the

floor of the House side by side with his diminutive co-teller, Biggar, at the head of a division of irreconcilables full thirteen strong.

This was the commencement of a succession of divisions which carried the Committee on past three o'clock in the morning. Just after the figures were declared, the major fell into an error which momentarily made him cautious. An amendment by one of the Home Rulers was put from the Chair in due form—

“That these words be added to the clause. Those that are of the opinion say ‘Aye;’ the contrary, ‘No.’”

There were a few “Ayes” from the Irish members, and a loud shout of “No” from the Ministerialists. The O’Gorman had not heard the question, but the cry of opposition acted upon him like the blast of a trumpet upon an old war-horse, and he suddenly came in with a great roar of “No!” This unintentional opposition to his own side was greeted with a burst of laughter that lasted several moments, and which The O’Gorman noticed by raising his hat and bowing defiantly to gentlemen opposite. He was quiet for a short time after this, but he recovered his spirits, and thenceforward ruthlessly objected to everything, dividing the Committee time after time, and finally bringing matters to a state in which Butt, Sullivan, and a score of the more responsible Home Rulers left the House.

But this made no difference to The O’Gorman. He seemed to feel that a great hour had struck for Ireland, and as he panted in and out of the division lobby with a comical look of fierceness on his face, his enormous person seemed suffused with the consciousness that if fate had sounded the hour, here truly was the man.

This evening the subject came on again, but was disposed of in a few minutes—Butt declaring himself and his followers satisfied with the struggle they had made, and after one more division, just for form’s sake, the Continuance Bill passed.

Then Gladstone, who had come down unexpectedly this morning, charged with the mission of obtaining the elision from the Public Worship Regulation Bill of the amendment introduced by Holt in Committee, again presented himself, and concluded the speech commenced at the morning sitting. But the House is evidently weary of the whole business, and though

Gladstone was as eloquent as ever, his audience was scarcely attentive. Later the debate grew more animated—thanks chiefly to the speech of Harcourt, who again violently attacked Gladstone. It seems, to those who heard the speech, difficult to understand how the ex-Premier is to hold any friendly communication with the ex-Solicitor-General after to-night.

In a division which rounded off the debate, the two front benches united their forces, but were handsomely beaten, the result being hailed with loud cheers. After this the Bill rapidly passed, Gladstone and many others having left the House when the figures were announced.

Aug. 7. — The Parliament prorogued to-day. The House of new Ministry. Commons is an empty, echoless space, they who lately peopled it being spread over sea and land. Much discussion as to how various members of the Ministry have borne themselves during the Session.

Foremost in official position, as in personal success, is the Premier. Never did the peculiar genius of Disraeli (it is a sublime sort of tact) shine more transcendently than during the past Session. He has at no period of his career risen higher as a Parliamentary speaker, whilst his management of the House is equalled only by that of Lord Palmerston. Not in the zenith of his popularity after the election of 1868 did Gladstone come near his great rival in personal hold upon the House of Commons, whilst in the last two Sessions of his administration he had utterly lost the control with which his position as leader endowed him. The change is consequently more marked, but the supremacy is none the less real. Disraeli's slow, deliberate rising in the course of a debate is always the signal for an instant filling up of the House and a steady settling down to the point of attention, the highest compliments that can be paid to a speaker.

At the outset of his current Premiership, Disraeli fixed upon a policy of polite consideration, to which he was the more drawn as certain members of the Ministry he succeeded were notorious for the brusqueness of their manner. The addition of a bit of banter and of a dash of serio-comicality lent a spiciness to his speech which was always relished, and was never allowed to reach the proportion at which the mixture left

an unpleasant taste upon the Parliamentary palate. Only once through a Session not without its trials did Disraeli display any temper, and that was recently, when Forster pressed him to state the names of the Commissioners to be added to the Charity Commission under the Endowed Schools Act Amendment Bill. Suffering acutely from gout, as he was during some busy weeks of the Session, Disraeli has stuck to his post with Spartan-like patience; and one of his most successful speeches, if not, on the whole, his best speech of the Session—that on the Home Rule question—was delivered after he had been sitting for four hours with folded arms on the Treasury bench, visibly tortured by twinges from his slippered and swollen feet.

Of his lieutenants, Stafford Northcote has most completely passed scatheless under the fierce light that beats upon the Treasury bench. He was blessed with a legacy of a splendid surplus, which he disposed of in an unexpectedly wise way. He has not taken any prominent part in the general business of the Session, but whenever he has spoken he has usually said the right word, and without attracting by his brilliancy has satisfied by his good sense. Gathorne Hardy has also done well. What lay to his hand was not much, as he settled things, but let us reflect upon all he left alone and be thankful. Cross has not equalled general expectation, perhaps because he has been tried most thoroughly. He has made as many speeches as all the other members of the Ministry put together, and, indeed, is rather fond of talking—herein breaking the rule which Disraeli appears to have laid down at his lodges of instruction. During the Committee on the Licensing Bill, Cross quite lost his head, and made a sad mess of some things he had undertaken to do. As Home Secretaries go, however, he is not below the average, and is generally liked in the House.

Ward Hunt, on the contrary, precisely fulfilled the expectation of all men of ordinary perception who had enjoyed the opportunity of observing him. Disraeli is popularly credited with a peculiar gift of judging character; but looking at the man he made First Lord of the Admiralty in a strong Government, it is difficult to believe in the existence of the gift. Ward Hunt is, to use a plain word, a stupid man. His intellectual vision is blurred, and not being able to see far ahead, he flounders about in a way that his leviathan size

makes doubly notable and absurd. He began his career at the Admiralty by a blustering speech that broke the spell which overwhelming success at the hustings had thrown over the Ministry, and freed the tongue-tied critics. That Disraeli, suave as he appears in Parliament, rules with a strong hand in the Cabinet, is demonstrated by the fact that, since Ward Hunt's outbreak, in which he talked about the "dummy ships" and the "fleet on paper," he has been as utterly silenced as a mouth-piece of the Government as if he were a tide-waiter instead of being First Lord of the Admiralty. Once only since the navy estimates were disposed of has he opened his mouth in debate, and then he put his foot in it. It was in Committee on the Licensing Act, and in the temporary absence of Cross, Ward Hunt got up and assured the Committee that the Government were for reopening public-houses at six on Sunday evenings. As the Home Secretary had just previously declared for seven, this remark fell like a bombshell among the Committee, and the difficulty was not overcome till Ward Hunt had been thrown over by his colleague.

Sandon, despite the failure of the Act with the care of which he was specially charged, has decidedly advanced in the good opinion of the House, and so has Hicks Beach, whose conduct of the Irish business has, barring a little effervescence at first, been excellent. Charles Adderley has happily had few chances of distinguishing himself. George Hamilton has made a capital Under-Secretary of State for India, and Lowther and Bourke have acquitted themselves well in such work as they have found to do. In short, Ward Hunt is a solitary example of unqualified personal failure in the new Administration, regarding them in the aspect presented from the Treasury bench.

SESSION 1875.

CHAPTER IV.

SKIRMISHES WITH THE IRISH.

Lord Hartington Leader of the Opposition—First formal appearance of the Irreconcilables—Disraeli's bow—Lopes and the Irish Members—Sir John Astley's maiden speech—John Martin and John Mitchell—Dr. Kenealy takes his seat—F. Stanley's early essay—Joseph Cowen's maiden speech—Bright breaks out—An Irish bull.

Feb. 8. — Lord
Hartington
Leader of the
Opposition.

Parliament opened to-day with the usual ceremonies. When the Speaker took the chair in the House of Commons, at ten minutes to four, the benches were fairly crowded. A quarter of an hour later Disraeli came in and was loudly cheered from the Ministerial benches. A faint cheer welcomed Roebuck's reappearance as he slowly and laboriously walked towards his seat at the corner below the gangway.

At this time both the Treasury bench and the front Opposition bench were crowded. With one exception, at the moment in everybody's mind, none of the usual occupants were absent, save Gladstone and Bright. On the Treasury bench Northcote sat on the right of his leader. On the left was Manners, looking as if he had never harried a postman. Gathorne Hardy next to him, Ward Hunt next, with some half-dozen other Ministers beyond.

On the front Opposition bench Forster stretched his legs in his elegant and familiar attitude. On his left, with folded arms and profoundly preoccupied look, was Harcourt. Still farther to the left was that other erudite lawyer Henry James, with Lyon Playfair guarding the gangway. At arm's length from Forster to the right, Goschen sat, with Stansfeld, Dodson, Childers, and Adam happily placed between him and Lowe. I fancy Lowe is hankering after his old place below the

gangway, and shall not be surprised some day to find him seeking it. He never has taken kindly to the front Opposition bench, and sits lower down on it than ever ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer sat before.

The notices of motion had been delivered; the questions had been led off, and still the one seat on the front Opposition bench, left vacant between Forster and Goschen, remained conspicuously empty. All eyes were turned towards it, when Hartington was observed entering from the passage, below the clock, and was received with cheers from the Liberal benches. The applause was prolonged as he took the seat of leader of the Opposition, which up to the end of the Session of 1873 was occupied by Disraeli, and was last Session generally appropriated by Henry James. To be fifteen minutes late on the first working night of the Session is pretty well, and highly promising on the part of a new leader of the Opposition. Hartington came in time enough, however, to hear the opening sentences of the speech in which Big Ben (Bentinck) once more tolled the story of the fearsome condition of the British army and navy. It is pleasing to know that in the capacious mind of this good old man room has been found for a few thoughts on our railway system, side by side with those fresh and valuable views on the sea and land forces, to the exposition of which a suffering House of Commons has long been subject.

"Our railway system, sir," he said this evening, "is simply a question of Blood *versus* Money—Blood *versus* Money, sir!"

Stanhope, in Court dress, moved the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, acquitting himself of his task in a long and somewhat ambitious speech, which was well received by the House. He was honoured on resuming his seat by a special compliment from the Premier, behind whom he sat. Whitelaw, who seconded the resolution, was less fortunate in gaining the attention of the House, and spoke amid a continued buzz of conversation.

The Speaker read the Address, which was, as usual, marked by a complete absence of originality of thought or diction. Hartington, who was cordially cheered on rising, criticised at some length and in detail the Ministerial programme for the year. He promptly gained the sympathy of the House by

deprecating in a modest and manly way any comparison between himself as leader of the Opposition and Palmerston, Disraeli, and Gladstone. He did not expect, he said, to exercise over the debates in the House that great influence his immediate predecessors had maintained. But it was necessary for the conduct of business that there should be some one on that side of the House who was recognised in the position which he had been called to fill, and if his services were of any value, they were placed unreservedly at the disposal of the country. He summed up his criticism on the Speech very effectively, and the loud cheers which, coming from the Liberal side, greeted the conclusion of the speech, marked the satisfaction of the members on those benches with the first essays of their new leader.

Disraeli, after a brief pause, which no one else attempted to disturb, rose and replied *seriatim* to the various objections raised by Hartington. The Premier was vigorous throughout, and occasionally lively, as when he answered Hartington's reproach that no sufficient information of the state of the finances had been given, by observing that it had not hitherto been the habit of Ministers to include the Budget in the Queen's Speech; when he replied to the question as to whether the programme in the Queen's Speech would be really carried out, by declaring the impossibility of his being able to say that it would—"for in the course of the Session you may have ecclesiastical misconceptions," a sly reference to the turmoil that beat about the Public Worship Regulation Bill of last Session; and when he protested against the noble lord's "grotesque reminiscences" of the most violent speeches of the most uninfluential persons delivered in the most obscure places, and called by the Liberals the opinions of the great Conservative party. He spoke for just over half-an-hour, and the House immediately adjourned.

Feb. 9. — First formal appearance of the Irreconcilables.

Debate on Address. Richard Power complained that it had not been distinctly stated in the Speech that Ireland was in a state of profound peace. He declared that for his own part he would not rest content while a single link remained of the hateful chain euphemistically called the Peace Preservation Act.

He called upon the English and Scotch members of the House to take their hands off his shoulder, and give him freedom of speech and action in a Home Rule Parliament. If the House would not consent to this arrangement he could assure them for himself, and for the gentlemen with whom he had the honour of acting, that they should constantly hear of Irish affairs at Westminster. That this was not an idle threat was in some measure proved by the debate thenceforward lapsing chiefly into a controversy amongst the Irish members, notwithstanding the efforts of George Jenkinson, Edmund Fitzmaurice, and Beresford to give it other turns.

John Martin, in an unimpassioned manner, which was reciprocated by the House, distinctly and categorically demanded in the name of the Irish people the abrogation of the "usurpation of 1800" and the establishment of an Irish Parliament. He was desirous that this should be carried out in "a friendly manner," and hinted at the possibility of "a federal arrangement" being subsequently arrived at by which England and Ireland would live happily ever afterwards. Herbert, as an Irish member and an Irish landlord, emphatically and indignantly denied that either Power or Martin was an authorised exponent of Irish opinion. "I deny it as much as—as much as I can in this House," were his words, spoken in a significant manner that caused great laughter.

This interposition of John Martin was surely a notable incident in Parliamentary annals. Imagine a lanky, humpbacked man, with lustrous eyes, pale face, through which high cheekbones prominently thrust themselves, coming forward in the House of Commons, and, holding awkwardly in his hands a Nineteenth Century hat, composedly asking Parliament to consent to, what in reality is, a constitutional revolution! To do him justice, Martin made the proposition in the coolest and most business-like way, much as if he had looked in to borrow a feed of oats for his horse, and had brought his hat to carry them away in. The House received the proposition in a similarly unemotional manner.

Feb. 12. — Dis- House sat only a couple of hours this afternoon.
rael's bow. Hartington late again, as he was on Tuesday; the unpunctuality being made all the more marked by the unwavering

regularity of Disraeli's attendance. Always five or ten minutes before the commencement of public business Disraeli comes walking slowly down the House, making obeisance to the Chair with lowly dignity as he reaches the corner of the table. Amongst his many claims to Parliamentary pre-eminence, it must be recorded that no man enters the House of Commons with such easy confidence, yet with such reverential bearing, as the Premier. The duty of bowing to the Chair on entering and leaving is a curiously painful ordeal to most members. Some furtively escape the difficulty by not bowing at all, hoping that in the throng the omission will not be noticed. Others make an ungracious nod, and others hurriedly and blushing accomplish an awkward curvature of the senatorial back-bone.

One of the funniest entrances I know is that of Rathbone. He has a curious habit of holding his hat loosely by the ultimate half-inch of the brim, with his hand pressed close against his body, the hat being thus brought almost in a direct line under his chin. He walks straight up the House with his eyes anxiously fixed on the Speaker, and when he reaches a certain place, evidently determined by the habit of counting his footsteps, he stops short, ducks his head, and then with a light heart makes off to his seat. Gladstone evades, doubtless undesignedly, the difficulty, by always coming in from behind the Speaker's chair.

Feb. 15. — *Lopes and the Irish members.* The House crowded on every bench when at half-past four this afternoon the stately figure of the Speaker rose from the chair, and the well-known call of "Order, order!" rang through the chamber. Lopes has been "saying things" about the Irish members, and those immaculate and nicely-spoken gentlemen, being naturally shocked and wounded by such conduct, were about to raise the question of breach of privilege. In brief, a personal row was expected, and that is enough to bring members into the House even if it were necessary that, by reason of exceeding gout, they should come swathed in flannels and supported on crutches, like a concourse of Earls of Chatham.

Into this throng, whilst it was yet languidly busy with questions and answers, entered Bright, making his first appearance this session. Close behind him came Gladstone, and the two sat side by side, unnoticed by friend or foe. They entered from

behind the Speaker's chair, and dropped into the obscure seats on the front Opposition bench where ex-Under-Secretaries of State and discharged Junior Lords of the Treasury hide their diminished heads. They sat thus for a long time before the whisper that carried the news of their presence began to circulate, and members strained their necks to catch glimpses of Gladstone as he sat in the shadow of the gallery.

The Irish row, when it did come off, proved disappointing. A. M. Sullivan, who, when he is natural, is a powerful speaker, was overweighted with a feeling of the solemnity of his task. He spoke for fifty minutes, and had his speech been half as long it would have been twice as successful. The concluding passage was well conceived, and had some dignity about it. But the momentary effect upon the House was removed when Newdegate immediately followed, and in his most lugubrious manner bewailed Sullivan's omission to conclude by moving a resolution. I have long suspected Newdegate of being a wag, an impression now confirmed by his suggesting that, as no other Irish member volunteered to speak, Sullivan was unsupported by his fellow-countrymen. Of course that was enough. Up jumped half-a-dozen Irish members, of whom O'Connor Power, being the youngest and most active, got the start. He was followed by Colman O'Loghlan, who talked about a good many things, least of all about the business before the House.

Disraeli, who has had a good deal of experience in this sort of thing, treated the question in just the happiest possible manner, getting some fun out of the Irish members, and not neglecting the duty of rebuking Lopes for his unmannerly speech. Lopes, who had meanwhile been sitting smiling in an uneasy manner, now rose, and, doing what he ought to have done on Friday, withdrew the offensive expressions. But before he sat down he lost his temper, and in a loud threatening tone, looking over towards the front Opposition bench as if the occupants were a Western Circuit jury, and shaking his forefinger at Sullivan the while, as if he were the prisoner in the dock, brought against the member for Louth two charges so utterly groundless—as was presently demonstrated—that they might be excused only by a consideration of the licence allowed to a prosecuting counsel who has a bad case at quarter sessions.

Feb. 16. — Sir John Astley's maiden speech. Sir John Astley made his maiden speech to-night, and a charming performance it was. Sir John is the author of the famous oration in which the Irish members of the House of Commons were delicately described as "the Irish chaps," numbering in their ranks "forty of the most confounded rascals ever seen." Sullivan had incidentally made it appear last night that Sir John had apologised for these expressions at the point of the pistol vicariously presented by Chevalier O'Clery, M.P. for Wexford. This had troubled Sir John a great deal more than his conscience had in the matter of his speech; and here he was standing midway across the floor (a serious breach of the rules of the House), with his hands kept out of his trousers-pocket only by violent efforts of moral suasion, and talking to the House of Commons as if it were the assembled mess in barracks.

"There's a good many people who mightn't know I'd been—I'd been in the army;" that being the gallant baronet's modest way of hinting at the fact that he had been in the forefront of the battle of the Alma, and had brought away three wounds.

"I have never been afraid of any individual yet," he continued; and a buzz of sympathy with Sir John went through the House as it was comprehended how profoundly he was impressed with the surrounding circumstances when he thus used so highly proper a word as "individual," when "chap" must have come so trippingly to his tongue.

The first appearance of the gallant member for North Lincolnshire was undoubtedly a great success. A burly handsome man is Sir John, with opulent white hair crowning a black-bearded face, that laughed all over from eyes to mouth as he declared that he had "never had the least fear of an Irishman." He found great favour in the eyes of members, and resumed his seat amid cheers that could not have been louder if his blundering, awkward, hesitating speech had been rounded by the periods of Cicero, and delivered with the skill of Demosthenes.

The rest of the business went off rapidly, and everybody was ready to go home, when an agreeable surprise, which the Government had got ready for the Home Rulers, was sprung upon them. Hart Dyke, the Conservative whip, had been hopping about the House ever since question time with a vivacity that had not escaped attention.

There were not a dozen members in the House when the Whip read out from the table his motion for the production of the Mitchell papers. The Home Rulers were peacefully dining when Dr. Ward, who had happened to be under the clock when the motion was read, raced into the room, breathlessly exclaiming, "Mitchell—papers—moving for Mitchell—Hart Dyke—papers—come-long!"

What would have happened if there had been no Irish member in the House is not difficult to guess. The motion, being merely one for papers, would have been granted, and a fresh betrayal of Ireland would have been accomplished. Fortunately—another instance of how great issues hang on small incidents—Captain Nolan had lunched late and was still in the House. The gallant captain always begins to address the House in a breathless, gasping manner, that suggests his just having had a cold shower-bath. Now his breath was almost entirely gone. But he saved Ireland, for, by standing up, he at least prevented further progress of business, and afforded an opportunity for the Home Rulers to lay down their knives and forks, rush through the lobbies, and into the House. Sullivan appeared first, with pallid face, blanched lips, and scared look, as if he had seen a wraith. Colman O'Loughlan came next, then an indistinguishable mass of members, and finally, far in the rear, Major O'Gorman, whose sudden abandonment of the dinner-table whilst the fish was still on affords one of the most touching instances of self-devoted patriotism ever recorded in a nation's history.

One consequence of the sudden and incoherent summons was that none of the Irish members was acquainted with the precise nature of the resolution that had been moved. That, however, is a condition of mind to which they are not wholly unaccustomed, and it did not deter them from making a succession of speeches, or the House from agreeing to order the papers.

Feb. 17. — John
Martin and
John Mitchell.

The John Mitchell debate ran in an altogether unexpected channel, and the only really Irish speech made in the course of the evening was that by John Martin. The Chevalier O'Clery got in a few words, it is true, but little that he said was heard, and besides,

his coat-tails were being pulled by his fellow-countrymen all the time he was on his legs. John Martin was in fine form, and it was really touching to hear him talking of the "tender honour" of the man who thought that though boiling water or boiling grease were not bad things to pour on the heads of soldiery from the safe 'vantage-ground of a top bedroom window, cold vitriol was a great deal better. Martin's chief object in rising was to show that Mitchell's escape, so far from being a breaking of his parole, was a transaction conducted in accordance with the strictest code of honour.

It seems that before he decided to escape, Mitchell submitted a statement of the circumstances to six Irish gentlemen, of whom Martin was one, and asked them to consider it and judge whether it would be dishonourable to adopt the scheme proposed for his deliverance. So particular was this soul of honour, this vitriolic paragon of uprightness, that he insisted upon having the statement of opinion put into writing. This was a point which Martin, always holding his hat between his hands brim uppermost, insisted upon with comical iteration. The six Irish gentlemen unanimously agreed that Mitchell might make off with honour. So he rode away.

What is to be done with grown-up men who seriously, and even solemnly, make statements like this, and angrily wonder when they are laughed at?

Feb. 18. — Dr. Kenealy takes his seat. The House of Commons was crowded as early as four o'clock, at which time the Speaker took the chair. The Strangers' and the Speaker's Galleries were alike full, and upwards of a dozen peers occupied the front seats of the gallery reserved for their accommodation. General Schenck, the American Minister, was also present. At a quarter past four, fifteen minutes earlier than usual, the Speaker called on public business, and, the preliminary questions having been disposed of, he next directed any new members who might be in attendance to present themselves at the table to be sworn. Thereupon Dr. Kenealy, who for the preceding ten minutes had been seated under the gallery outside the bar, advanced up the floor of the House, holding a stout umbrella in one hand and a hat in the other. Bowing to the Speaker, the Doctor stood waiting for what

might follow. The Speaker, rising, observed that, contrary to the usual practice, the new member had approached the table unaccompanied by sponsors. Were there two members of the House prepared to introduce him?

The new member displayed much readiness to enter into argument with the Speaker on the subject, and, with hands on the table, was proceeding to show that such a custom, whilst usual, was not absolutely, and as a matter of law, essential. But he was promptly stopped by the Speaker, who, reminding him that he had not yet reached the stage of membership at which he might address the House, remarked that the practice of introducing new members had obtained since 1668, and there had in the meantime been no breach of the precedent. That was the rule of the House, and the Speaker's declaration that it was his business to see the rules of the House were carried out was the signal for loud and general cheering. Kenealy, proposing further to speak on the matter, was informed by the Speaker that when action was pending touching any hon. member, it was usual for him to withdraw. Bowing again, Kenealy turned and left the House.

Disraeli observed that the object of the rule referred to was to establish the identity of a new member, and as on this occasion there was, he believed, no question of identity, he moved that the rule be dispensed with. After some remarks from Whalley, Bright, who had been sitting on the front Opposition bench, rose, and, breaking the long silence of many sessions, quietly said that, out of deference to the will of the large constituency who had elected Dr. Kenealy, he would himself, if the hon. member would accept his companionship, be glad to walk with him to the table. The right hon. gentleman, who, speaking from the extreme end of the table, was scarcely recognised until he got through his opening sentence, was loudly cheered from all parts of the House when he resumed his seat. He had evidently risen in obedience to a sudden impulse; and when he found himself actually standing at the table, raising his voice in a chamber wherein it had been silent for many years, he was as confused as a new member making his maiden speech. He, the great prince of phraseology, halted and stumbled amongst the words that faltered to his lips, and for a moment there seemed a danger of his utterly breaking down. But he pre-

sently got over his difficulty, and said what was at his heart in pleasant, clearly spoken speech.

The resolution having been put and agreed to—though not without lingering cries of dissent from one or two members below the gangway on the Conservative side—the Speaker said “Let the hon. member be called in.” Kenealy promptly re-entered, and again approached the table, always with his hat and umbrella in his hands. The umbrella he, on reaching the table, laid against the mace in a position which gave currency to the statement that he had “hung it” upon the sacred symbol of authority. The Clerk at the table administered the oath to the new member, and directed him where to sign the roll, after which he introduced him by name to the Speaker. The right hon. gentleman, in accordance with custom, shook him by the hand, and Kenealy disappeared behind the chair, not attempting to find a seat in the crowded House.

Feb. 22.—F. Stanley's early essay.

Fred Stanley, brother of Lord Derby, made his first official speech to-night, on the Regimental Exchanges Bill. It was a painful exhibition, relieved only by the courage with which the gallant captain persisted in the hopeless attempt. “I think, sir,” he said, nervously turning over a large sheaf of notes he held in his hand, and which developed a remarkable propensity for presenting themselves upside down—“I think—that is, I would venture to say—(pause). Now this question is one in which a colonel, or, I may say, a major, might—that is, supposing his regiment were ordered to India—to India—(pause). I was saying, sir, that a major or a colonel—(pause); but, sir—” (prolonged pause).

“On, Stanley, on,” whispered Disraeli, immediately before whom Stanley, with the perspiration shining upon his face, was standing.

But it was no use. Not that Stanley did not try, for he held on gallantly amid the sympathising silence of the House, once broken by a cheer, when he frankly threw himself upon its forbearance and pleaded inexperience and inability.

“I have come to an end,” he said, after standing at the table for twenty minutes.

As a matter of mathematical exactness, it must be observed

that he had already come to several. Perhaps he meant that this was an end to his oratorical essays; and it is to be desired that it may be so regarded. Such an absolute failure at attempted consecutive articulation of ideas has not been seen in the House during the present reign.

Lowe seems to have given up as hopeless the endeavour to assist his memory by notes. To-night he spoke entirely without, and has rarely spoken better. He broke down once in quoting a couplet, but the rest he delivered easily enough, far more easily than when he used to have two or three scraps of paper before him, and, holding them in turn within an inch of his eyebrows, searched for the one he wanted, and as a rule didn't find it. To-night he worked not only the House, but himself, into a state of high excitement, and as he was sitting down he, in the hurry of the moment, took up Campbell-Bannerman's hat, which was on the table beside his own, and frantically tried to put it on. It was very funny to see him pressing it down over his white hair, and to watch the expression that came over his face when he was thoroughly convinced that it would not go on, and the idea dawned upon him that perhaps he had got the wrong hat.

Ward Hunt rose from the Treasury bench as Lowe sat down, perceiving which apparition the latter, having by this time got his own hat, promptly walked out of the House.

Hunt floundered about in a blind way, disturbing the sea of controversy with the undisciplined flapping of his portentous tail, and general hitting out in the wrong direction. He started by disclosing a total misapprehension of what Trevelyan had been saying, and when the hon. member rose and repeated his original statement, snappishly observed that he "was glad the hon. member did not *now* hold that view."

Feb. 25.—Joseph Cowen's maiden speech.

On second reading of Cameron's Friendly Societies Bill, Joseph Cowen made his maiden speech, which was exceedingly well received. He took objection to the penal clauses with respect to the fraudulent registration of the deaths of children, and, amid approving cheers, warmly protested that the class specially legislated for were as little prone to the temptation provided against as were the classes above them in the social grade.

Feb. 28.—Bright breaks out. A Turnpike debate is proverbially one of the dullest episodes of the Session. Perhaps this distinction is in some measure due to the fact that it is Sir George Jenkinson who has made himself the apostle of the cause. Turnpikes being down on the paper for to-night, and a long debate being inevitable, everybody prepared for a dull evening, and was resigned accordingly. But out of the midst of the dulness, like lightning out of leaden clouds, there suddenly flashed a tongue of fire.

Ever since the session opened Bright has been, up to the dinner hour, one of the most constant frequenters of the House. He sits at the lower end of the front Opposition bench, chatting with Gladstone when the ex-Premier is there, or with Lowe, or, more rarely, with Hartington—never with Harcourt. In the first week his appearance was much noticed, but now the novelty of his presence has worn off, and to-night it was perhaps not observed that he was there till he was discovered standing at the table, evidently about to make a speech. He opened a fine vein of irony, and his utterances were accompanied by a running fire of cheering from the Liberal benches. But the decadence of his power was evidenced less by the tremulous tone of his voice and the slight stooping of his broad shoulders than by the slip which Disraeli was so prompt to see and avail himself of.

The Premier was on his feet before Bright had resumed his seat, and in an angry manner said some things by way of prologue which had better have been left unsaid. But when he had worked his way up to the obvious retort, it was tersely spoken and admirably delivered.

"The right honourable gentleman," he said, "accuses us of having acted with great unfairness to the late Government, and he says, 'When we proposed such a policy as you now advocate, you defeated us by a hundred majority.' Very well; but as we were in a great minority in the late Parliament, if you were defeated by a hundred majority, you were defeated by your own friends."

Enthusiastic cheering by the intelligent country gentlemen, who for once quite understood the repartee, and a thunderous "Hear, hear!" from Sir George Jenkinson, who, from his seat below the gangway, leaned forward, looking towards the Trea-

surely Bench, and so bringing into fuller view the great broad Turnpike-road which is providentially marked down the centre of his head from the back of the crown to the forehead, and the two ragged locks of hair that lie, like autumn hedgerows, on either side of it.

Mar. 1.—An Irish bull. Hicks-Beach moved second reading of Coercion Bill, which after brief debate was agreed to without division. In the course of his speech the Irish Secretary gravely mentioned, as evidence of the improved condition of Ireland, upon which he based the hope of some day being able to propose the absolute extinction of exceptional legislation, that he had received from an able and experienced magistrate of Westmeath, a report in which it was stated "No outrage has been recently committed in this district, *except two or three attempts to murder.*" Beach evidently couldn't make out what the House was laughing at.

CHAPTER V.

UNDER MR. DISRAELI'S MANAGEMENT.

An odd Entry in the Records—Kenealy "shakes the Dewdrops from his Mane"—Gladstone's Reappearance in the Arena—An impressive Scene—Whalley proposes a Plan for the Pacification of Ireland—"The Major"—Disraeli and the Irish Members—Major O'Gorman defies the Premier—Disraeli's Management of the House.

Mar. 2.—An odd entry in the Records. At five o'clock Fawcett rose to call attention to the present unsatisfactory condition of education in the rural districts, and to move a resolution to the effect "that in the opinion of the House it is undesirable that a less amount of school attendance should be secured to children employed in agriculture than is enjoyed by children employed in other branches of industry." At this time the House was well filled, the Treasury and the front Opposition benches being specially crowded. Both Bright and Gladstone were present, and sitting just behind the ex-Premier was Kenealy, who has not before been in the House since the day he

took the oath. Butt also took his seat for the first time this session. Floyer made a long speech against the motion, telling an affecting story about a little boy whose literary education was, it appeared, scarcely satisfactory, but who "brightened up" in a remarkable manner when he saw "the top-knots of a horse." Fawcett's views on education, if adopted in rural districts, would, Floyer thought, "spoil many a carter."

The motion was rejected on a division, being cut off after the words "undesirable that"; Pell proposing to add other words. When Pell's amendment was put, motions for the adjournment were pressed by the Opposition, and, finally, one for the adjournment of the House was carried. The consequence was that the original motion was left standing upon the records of the House in the following form:—

"That in the opinion of this House it is undesirable that——"

Mar. 4.—Kenealy "shakes the dewdrops from his mane."

At question time the House of Commons presented an appearance for a comparison with which we must go back to the great division nights during the progress of the Irish Land and the Irish Church Bills. Every seat on the floor of the House was occupied, and whilst a row of members filled the front bench of the gallery on the left of the Speaker, the gallery opposite was so crowded that members were glad to find sitting room in the gangways. In the gallery facing the Speaker, and appropriated to peers, eldest sons of peers, and other dignified persons, one seat, just over the clock, was conspicuously empty. For whom this had been kept presently appeared, when the Prince of Wales entered, and nodding pleasant acknowledgment of the presence of the double row of peers through whom he made his way, sat down in the vacant seat beside Rosebery. Amongst others who sat in this gallery were Prince Christian and the ex-King of Naples.

The questions were long and many in number, and it was a few minutes before five when Kenealy rose, amid a dead silence, and said he had a question to put to Evelyn Ashley, to whom he had given private notice. The question was as to the accuracy of a newspaper report of a speech delivered by him in the Isle of Wight, in the course of which he was reported to

have referred to Kenealy as having put in the box a man whom he knew to be a false witness. He wished to ask "the hon. and learn'd gentleman" whether the report was substantially correct. Ashley, whose rising was unmarked by any demonstration, corrected Kenealy's statement that he had sent him a notice of the question he proposed to put to him. He had "done no such thing," in support of which strong affirmation, he read a note received from Kenealy.

He was proceeding to describe the circumstances under which the speech complained of had been delivered, prefacing his remarks by a profession of his readiness to submit to any course the House saw fit to decree, when Kenealy "rose to order." Ashley was not, he thought, at liberty to discuss the matter now, seeing that a question had simply been put to him, and Kenealy was waiting for an answer before carrying the business further himself. The Speaker having ruled that Ashley was in order, that gentleman proceeded with his reply, which involved a statement of the circumstances under which the speech was delivered, and a slight correction of the terms of the newspaper report.

At the outset Ashley was listened to in the same undemonstrative manner as Kenealy had been; but when he ventured to express the opinion that it was "sometimes necessary to speak the truth" there was a faint cheer from the opposite gallery, which timidly grew till it was taken up from all parts of the House. Ashley did not attempt to justify his language, though he indicated his willingness to do so if the House would sanction such a course. He certainly did not withdraw the remarks, and left the direction of his subsequent conduct in the hands of the House. Kenealy appeared for the moment cowed by the strong expression of feeling which the latter portion of Ashley's remarks had evoked, the effect being the greater as the House had evidently made up its mind at the outset to hear both sides in silence. He rose, and saying he "could not discuss the question now," gave notice that he should call attention to the speech of the hon. member "to-morrow."

There was a brief pause, which Lowe disturbed by attempting to speak, but was reminded by the Speaker that there was no question before the House. In response to cries of "Move! move!" Lowe moved that the House adjourn, and proceeded to protest against the growing practice of raising questions of

privilege upon reports of speeches of members delivered outside the House. Such a practice if persisted in might, he said, become a most galling and injurious instrument of oppression. He was unable to find any precedent for it except in the case of O'Connell, and that, he held, did not apply to the present circumstance. What Ashley was reported to have said of Kenealy might be a slander, and if he wanted redress let him seek it in a court of law.

Disraeli next rose, and, amid loud cheering, declared that the matter must be "settled now." They had heard the accusation and the defence, and it would be intolerable if a third opportunity were exacted "by the member for Stoke." The Premier emphatically laid down the principle that a question of privilege could arise only in the case of members of Parliament having been attacked in their capacity as members of Parliament. He had had some doubt whether the custom was not being strained in the recent case of Lopes and the Irish members. In the present case there was not a shadow of justification for raising the question. It was in his capacity as a member of the bar that the member for Stoke—the Premier now and always omitted the usual prefix when referring to the member for Stoke—had been attacked, "and let him," he continued, amid loud and prolonged laughter, "appeal to those courts of law with which he is so intimately acquainted." He thought the House should now leave the matter where it was, and he would move, if Lowe would withdraw his resolution, that the House, having heard the charge and the defence, proceeds to the orders of the day.

All this time Kenealy had been busily writing in his notebook. When Disraeli resumed his seat he rose and "begged respectfully to controvert" Lowe's statement, that the question at issue between himself and Ashley could not be discussed in the House. Again the tacit determination of the House to preserve a decorous silence whilst Kenealy was speaking was apparent; but laughter broke out when he indignantly protested against "what he ventured to call the American rowdyism" that had been imported into public discussions. He hit out vigorously at Lowe, whose "remarkable obliquity of vision" he bewailed, and in a tone of some pathos regretted that "the First Lord of the Treasury" should have cast upon him that

sneer about his intimate acquaintance with the law courts. "I have," he said, with considerable vigour, "no respect for our law courts, and will never seek a remedy in one." Above the laughter which this sally drew forth, the Doctor raised his voice (which had now lost its momentary pathos), and looking sternly across at Disraeli, who was quietly reading his letters, said such an observation came with a bad grace from one whose avocation for the greater part of his life had been the production of romantic fiction and poetic fable.

Here there were some cries of "Order, order!" and the Doctor, turning fiercely towards the Speaker, assured him that no private member should call him to order "unless backed by you, sir." New members, he always thought, were encouraged rather than put down, at which the House again heartily laughed. Finally, after having been called to order for a reference to the Lord Chief Justice, the new member "respectfully submitted" to the House that they ought either to make Ashley prove his words "or brand him as a calumniator and a slanderer." For himself he was perfectly indifferent to the upshot of the proceedings. Of one thing he was certain, that the calumnious reflections thrown on his character would recoil on their authors; "and," he added, sinking his voice to its deepest notes, and vigorously wagging his head, "that I shall shake them off as the lion shakes the dewdrops from his mane!"

This was too much for the already grievously burdened gravity of the House. A prolonged peal of laughter broke forth, for the full length of which the member for Stoke stood surveying the animated scene through his spectacles. When he spoke again it was in quite an altered tone and with a subdued mien, and his assurance that he would never do anything to make a single member ashamed of his companionship was received with a generous and hearty cheer. Bright, who seemed to speak with great difficulty, gently urged Ashley to say he withdrew the charge; but Ashley, observing that it had not been an ill-considered statement, and was made with some personal knowledge of facts, was not able to do more than say he regretted having made the accusation at a political dinner. Lowe having withdrawn his formal motion for the adjournment of the House, Disraeli put his resolution, which

was seconded by Hartington, and agreed to without a dissenting voice.

Mar. 16. — Gladstone's reappearance in the arena.

A morning sitting to make progress with the Regimental Exchanges Bill. Lowe, amid cheers and counter-cheers, tersely described the object of the Bill as being "to make commissions in the army a valuable commodity." Shortly after four o'clock Gladstone appeared at the lower end of the table, and was welcomed by loud and prolonged cheering from the Opposition. Commencing in a quiet, even constrained, manner, he described the unwillingness with which he interposed in the debate, and proceeded to set forth arguments against the Bill, which, whilst containing no new point for those who had followed the long debate through its earlier stages, seemed to have gained much in force and clearness. With increased warmth of manner he warned the Government of the danger of thus introducing into Parliamentary procedure a principle of disturbance which had been disastrously illustrated last session by their action in respect of the Endowed Schools Act Amendment Bill. Some day, he said, the powerful majority which now enabled them to carry such Bills as they pleased would have dwindled, and they might find that the measure which they were now measuring out would be meted out to them. In an eloquent passage he supported his declaration that the possession of wealth ought not to be a ground for the avoidance of irksome duties, leaving it for the House to say whether it was "decent" to be busy-ing itself with legislation calculated to place wealth in a position of advantage as compared with talents, character, and good service.

Gathorne Hardy sprang up as Gladstone sat down, cheers and counter-cheers filling the now crowded and excited House. The War Minister gracefully welcomed Gladstone back into the arena of debate, and acknowledged the courtesy and fairness of spirit with which he had in his speech admitted the personal desire of the Ministry to prevent money-trafficking in commissions. But after these few opening sentences, Hardy's impetuosity was unrestrained, and, cheered by the continuous and enthusiastic plaudits of members behind, he in his most breathless manner hit out at Lowe and Goschen.

Gladstone's return to debate has created a profound sensation. The House feels with a strong accession of conviction that for the Liberals there is no Allah but Allah, and that all possible substitutes for Mahomet as his prophet will remain mere figureheads.

Mar. 18.—An impressive scene. Here is David Montague Scott, who has been junior member for East Sussex for fully twelve months, and only to-night has the House been made aware of the fact that it is endowed with the presence of one of the finest actors off the stage. Scott was noticed first in connection with a bulky book, under the weight of which he staggered across the floor and sat down beside his colleague, whose solitary pair of trousers are so short as to give colour to a wicked rumour, that they were originally made for one of the Foundlings, and have somehow come into Gregory's possession by right of his treasurership of that excellent institution. Gregory to-night wore a huge green patch over his left eye, which lent an additional charm to his personal appearance. He had been conspicuously before the House in the matter of an amiable indiscretion on the part of his constituents, the Cuckfield magistrates, who had been sending Luke Hills to prison for three months because he could not pay some trumpery damages.

Everybody had spoken who had anything to say on the subject: when up rose Scott from beside the big book and Gregory, and in a condition of mind that did not allow him to speak above a slow stage whisper, expressed the horror with which he had heard Peter Taylor speak lightly of the Cuckfield magistrates. Scott, who is about the height of the late Charles Kean, and far more impressive, stood with his right shoulder partly turned towards Taylor, and threw his whispers over it at the member for Leicester.

The rebuke would have been really most imposing if it had not been for Scott's eyeglasses. Each time he finished a sentence he turned his head half round, and with haughtily downcast eyes, and an aspect of excruciating severity, looked at Taylor's boots. To do this he took off his eyeglasses; to read his notes the eyeglasses were necessary. But it was too much for the gravity of the House to observe the *pince-nez*, after it had, with solemn sweep of the arm, been placed on the hon. member's Roman nose, repeatedly fall flat thereon, and then slide off.

The House laughed, but Scott relaxed none of the severe lines in which his whiskerless face was cast, and with the same solemn sweep of the arm, and a recurrence of the haughty downward glance at the region of the boots of the vilifier of the Cuckfield magistrates, ever as the glasses tottered and fell he put them on his nose again, and once more thrilled the House with slowly uttered whisper.

Mar. 19.—Whalley proposes a plan for the pacification of Ireland. Coercion Bill again. Whalley interposed to explain that the troublesome state of Ireland was absolutely owing to "the priesthood," and for counteracting their influence there was nothing hopeful to be done but to send into the country a band of faithful, honest missionaries to convert the peasantry to Protestantism.

"I appeal to the right hon. gentleman opposite to listen to me," he cried in a sudden outburst. "Give me the power; let me go into Ireland armed only with the sling and stone of free discussion, and accompanied by a few men like the unfortunate Murphy [an Orange emissary lately killed in a religious riot], and I believe that I can do more than Prince Bismarck did in Prussia."

Dr. O'Leary was put up to move the adjournment of the debate, and incidentally varied the dulness of the night, calling forth a hearty burst of laughter by an odd reference to Dodson. "The right hon. gentleman"—he was saying when a friendly countryman interrupted him with a correction, which had some reference to Mr. Dodson's not now being in office. "The *late* right hon. gentleman, then," said O'Leary hotly, evidently, though being as he admitted "a young member," not liking to be thus corrected on trivial matters of form in the face of a hostile House of Commons.

Mar. 20.—"The Major O'Gorman has come much to the front of late, and his reputation is quite national. As an unconscious humorist he is unique. There is about him *je ne sais quoi* charm that enthroned him highest amongst the pleasant oddities of the House the moment he first rose in his place, and before he had spoken a word. Quite apart from the similarity in personal appearance, his humour smacks of Sir John

Falstaff's. But the resemblance is only fleeting, and when we try to seize it, it is gone. There is an indescribable comicality in a back-view of him as he walks down the floor of the House, going to or from the division lobbies. No one could look without a smile upon the broad, nearly square expanse of cloth above, with glimpses below of the dwarfed legs that carry him along in a jaunty manner, each limb going out for the stride with a little flourish, as who should say, "This may look a heavy load, but it is nothing at all to me."

Seen entering the House, always walking strictly in the middle of the broad passage lest peradventure he should carry away a corner of the bench, the smile of the looker-on grows broader and kindlier. There is a fierce look on his bearded face, such as Falstaff wore when he fought his battle of Gad's Hill over again. His mouth twitches as if one of the men in buckram had recklessly come in his way again, and he had bitten him in twain as a cat snaps at flies on a summer's day. He carries his hat in his right hand almost at arm's length, so that in swinging to and fro it shall have free scope. His step, though springy, is slow, and not without a certain elephantine stateliness. When he reaches his seat he cautiously deposits himself thereon; but once having ascertained that all is well, and that the bench will not give way, he re-assumes a jaunty air, jerks his hat on to his head, often—especially after dinner—letting the front brim rest upon his nose, like a rakish old major as he is. Then he folds his arms as far as they will go over his capacious chest, and begins snapping at the flies again.

When the thoughts stirring within him are on the point of explosion he jumps up, with hat held out in his right hand, and, standing silent for a few moments, gasps at the Speaker. Then comes the thunder of his prefatory, "SUR!" and thereafter, in a succession of thunder-claps, there follows the incongruous jumble of bizarre half-made thoughts which dim and mistaken notions of what other people are doing and saying have generated in some region lying between his boots and his hat. He does not try to be funny—at least, not often, and then is least amusing. He is indeed generally terribly in earnest, and those flights of fancy, adorned by unmatched fragments of classical lore, are laborious and determined efforts at

rivalling Curran, or at least Butt. He has never yet understood why grave senators should have lain down helpless on the benches of the House of Commons and shrieked with laughter when he delivered that famous allegory about the nun bereaved by many murders. That speech had cost him long hours of preparation. It was pitched in a high key, and he thought it would show these Saxons that, though chains might weigh heavy on Ireland, and centuries of ill-usage might have "streaked her long black hair with grey," eloquence still abode on the tongues of her sons.

Since then, as the unappreciative House will have it so, he has gradually come out as a funny man, a cracker of jokes, an utterer of sarcasms, a sayer of good things. His jokes are not always comprehensible; his sarcasms cut like the back of a razor; and the humour of his witticisms lies in the circumstance of their usually presenting themselves wrong end first. He is funny because he can't help it; and when he interferes with the slow processes of nature, and tries to re-direct or improve them, he mars the whole.

Mar. 21. — Disraeli and the Irish members.

The manner in which the Irish members deliberately set about to "take it out of" the Tyrant in talk is not the least remarkable feature in Parliamentary usages. Last session, the Irish members fought through a long summer night against the inclusion of the Coercion Acts in the Annual Continuance Bill, coming down again early on the next day, being Wednesday, prepared to carry on the war. Disraeli, putting his hands to his ears with a despairing gesture, then promised that the Coercion Acts should this year have a whole night given up to their discussion, and that the Bill for their renewal should be brought in by itself early in the session, so that the talk about it might commence in good time. He has fulfilled his pledge, and the Coercion Acts were put down for second reading as the first order to-night. The Irish members made no secret of their intention to talk at least for two nights. Disraeli took note of this, and played a card which wrought a crueller grievance to Ireland than half a dozen Coercion Acts. Orders were passed along the Conservative benches that the debate was to be left entirely in the hands of the Home Rulers.

The effect of such an arrangement will be perceived in a moment. There were a given number of Irish members ready with a speech. It was calculated that, as would have happened under ordinary circumstances, speakers would rise from alternate sides, and thus if Ireland could talk for, say, eight hours, the other portions of the empire would certainly furnish talk for an equal period of time, and thus two sittings at least would be pleasantly got through. But the wary Premier had spoiled all these calculations. Member after member rose from the Home-Rule benches. Men who, coming in from remote parts of Ireland at the memorable election of 1874, were wholly unfamiliar to the House, presented themselves, and made dull speeches; whilst men who had often spoken now spoke the more. But it was evident that this was a game that could not long be played. Not only were the ranks of the Home-Rule speakers getting rapidly thinned, but successive speakers had nothing to say except the old things that had been said by the "hon. member who had just sat down."

Thus the chatter was of the dullest; but it was interesting to watch the rising storm of fury in the ranks of the Home Rulers, and then to look across at the Treasury bench, where Disraeli sat with folded arms and bent head, listening with the most polished attention to all that gentlemen opposite were saying, and apparently quite at a loss to understand what they were so angry about. They had complaints to make of the proposed legislation? Well, was not the fullest opportunity given them to utter their complaints, and was not the House profoundly attentive? This was the way in which the Premier, with raised eyebrows, and in a tone of gently complaining surprise, put the matter when at length the storm burst, and—like an angry woman who has been scolding by the hour her unresponsive husband, bursts into tears of rage because he won't answer her—the Irish members passionately demanded if nobody on the opposite side was going to speak.

It was a clever game, beautifully played, and changed just when it might have been spoiled by being carried too far. When A. M. Sullivan, with furious gestures, and in a loud voice, brought under the Premier's notice the fact that as yet the Treasury bench had taken no part in the discussion, the right hon. gentleman, still preserving with admirable effect the provoking

attitude of leaving the conduct of the debate in the hands of the Irish members, put up Hicks-Beach to reply, and on the motion for adjournment got all his own way in the arrangement of the business for the following night. It was one of the finest bits of parliamentary fencing I have seen for many years. Disraeli never moved a pace. He stood impassively in the ring, with a buttoned foil lightly held in his hand, and if awkward people wildly ran against it, wounding themselves, and knocking each other over in the rout, was *he* to blame?

Mar. 23.—Major
O’Gorman de-
fies the Pre-
mier.

Callan resumed the debate on the Coercion Bill. Gibson, the new member for Dublin University, who speaks from behind the Treasury bench, made at least twice over a speech the first delivery of which created a most favourable impression. A. M. Sullivan opposed the Bill in an exceptionally effective manner, reading a long list of extracts from the charges of judges delivered at the last assizes in Ireland, all unanimous in describing the state of crime as being extremely low. “These,” said the hon. member, “were the opinions of the judges, and putting them beside bugaboo stories of the policemen,” with which the Chief Secretary was charged, he challenged the House to pass the Coercion Bill. Biggar commenced a speech by observing that although there were not forty members present (as a matter of fact there were ten), he would say a few words. According to a rule of the House, acted upon on several occasions, the Speaker’s attention being thus called to the numbers present, a count would have immediately followed. But the Speaker was judiciously deaf to the maladroit remark, and Biggar was spared the confusion of having counted out himself and the House.

At ten o’clock the Solicitor-General for Ireland (Plunket) rose, defending the Bill in a speech which, whilst its arguments were of necessity old, was freshened by frequent flashes of fervid yet simple eloquence. Butt followed, the House now being full by comparison with its emptiness since five o’clock. Tracing the history of England from 1819 through all troublesome times to 1848, he showed how disaffection in England had been met not by Coercion Acts, but by attempts to improve by legislation the condition of the people. That was what Butt

proposed the Government should now do for Ireland. "Let the star of the British Constitution shine over Ireland," he said, "and peace and prosperity will then prevail."

Disraeli, proceeding in his most solemn and impressive manner to wind up the debate, began by slowly enunciating the sentence, "This is a measure of necessity passed in a spirit of conciliation." Major O'Gorman, who had been absent from his place during a prolonged dinner hour, and who now occupied his usual place on the back seat below the gangway to the left of the Speaker, marked the conclusion of the sentence with a loud shout of "No!" which he continued in a series of thunderous ejaculations.

"If that," said Disraeli quietly, "is to be taken as a reply, I must observe that, in accordance with the rules of debate, the hon. member is precluded from taking any further part in these proceedings."

Thereupon the Major jumped up, with his hat held out in his right hand, and called out in stentorian tones, "I have not spoken one word."

In vain the Ministerialists called "Order, order!" The Major stood, hat in hand, roaring in a voice that easily dominated the storm, "I have not spoken one word!" and it was not till the Speaker interposed that he yielded to the solicitations of his friends who hung upon his coat tails, and resumed his seat.

But he did not remain there long. Before the Premier had proceeded far the huge figure of the Major was observed sailing slowly down the floor of the House, bowing low to the Speaker. Whither he was bound became as he neared the Treasury bench rather a serious speculation. Was he literally "going for" the frail figure of the veteran statesman who stood at the corner of the table? But all anxiety was temporarily set at rest when, on reaching the gangway, he turned off to the right, and took a seat on the fourth bench directly behind the Leader of the Opposition, and fully facing the Premier. From this coign of vantage he kept up a running fire of "Hear, hear," uttered in a voice that reverberated through the outside lobbies. Disraeli, though struggling gallantly against this extraordinary visitation, was for some time visibly disconcerted, and occasionally lost the thread of his speech, the Major filling up the pauses with sten-

torian cries of "Hear." But as Disraeli proceeded he became master of the situation, and though the Major continued to roar, the Premier went on his way, seeming inspired to even greater success by the unusual difficulties under which he laboured.

Mar. 24. — Disraeli's Management of the House.

The House adjourned to-day for the Easter recess, and there is an opportunity of looking back over the portion of the life of the new Parliament already accomplished, and considering how we have been getting on under our new managers. On the whole, and speaking simply of the business management of the House apart from the consideration of Imperial politics, we have done very well. Disraeli came into power as the avenger of the outraged principle of rest. We had been going too fast and too long under the guidance of Gladstone. It was Disraeli's principal mission to put on the break, and while preserving some sense of motion, to take care that it should be easy. For such a mission he was a heaven-born minister. He has the patience which makes possible a masterly inactivity. The difference between his temperament and that of his predecessor is indicated by the simple fact that whilst he can sit motionless for two hours on a bench in the House, Gladstone could not so sit for two minutes.

The present need of the House of Commons is restful ease, tempered with a little amusement, and Disraeli has skilfully managed to supply the necessity. Never, even in the best days of Palmerston, has the House been so docile under management as during the current session. In the day of his power, Gladstone ruled the House, but did not lead it; and when his power deserted him, the House paid off old scores by assuming an attitude towards its nominal leader that must have been galling to his proud spirit. Disraeli never domineers over the House. On the contrary, he rather goes out of his way to assert that the House is arbitrator of its own acts, and that he is its very humble servant.

He really makes concessions to the expressed wishes even of a minority of members, especially when those wishes tend in the direction of shortening a sitting. During the current session we have not sat nearly so many hours as during any similar term under Gladstone's ministry. But the amount of actual work

done is at least equal in bulk. If Gladstone set out with the determination to reach a certain stage or a given clause of a Bill, he simply, by the pressure of his majority, forced the House into agreement with his plan. The consequence was that a spirit of factious opposition was raised, and temper being lost on both sides, more time was wasted in fighting over the question of adjournment than might have served to effect Gladstone's original purpose. Disraeli never fights a minority that shows any determination to stay progress. For form's sake he will, if pushed to it, take a division on the question of adjournment, and when that has been decided, will give way to renewed opposition. This may seem weak, but the Premier knows with whom he is dealing. The House of Commons is too generous to take a mean advantage of a good disposition, and only once this session has a vexatiously premature motion for adjournment been made, and that was on the Coercion Acts, when, at twenty minutes to twelve, Dr. O'Leary moved to adjourn the debate.

Gladstone would probably have leaped up and in passionate language denounced such a proceeding as factious, declared that the Government were prepared to resist it to the last, and probably have hinted that, if the motion were not rejected by a large majority, he would be compelled to resign. Disraeli, putting his eyeglass up—and perhaps no one uses an eyeglass with such comical effect—looked at the clock, and observed that if the hon. member had intended to conclude with such a motion, he would have been glad if he had continued his remarks over the space of twenty minutes. Then he proceeded in a friendly tone to point out the unreasonableness of adjourning the debate at this hour; and when he sat down, the Irish members, with a baseness for which O'Leary has probably ere this called them to account, were the first to cry "Withdraw!" and after a few moments' interruption, business proceeded in accordance with the Premier's plans.

Disraeli unfortunately cannot endow his subordinates with his genius, but he has imbued them with his conciliatory disposition. That conciliation may be carried too far is proved by the dead-lock we have reached in the matter of select committees. Since the session opened select committees have been given with both hands. In fact, it may be said that the Opposition has been nourished on select committees. The failing is, however, an

amiable one, and, apart from considerations of politeness, is well suited to the emergencies of the hour. The Opposition are not in a position either successfully to oppose or hopefully to initiate measures. They must do something, and accordingly where once they would have brought in a Bill, and possibly have made a law, they now move for a select committee. The concession is graciously made, and "lo, the winter is passed, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land."

All this is due to the skilful good temper of Disraeli. In this also he has educated his party. It is true that sometimes, elate with the joy of discovering how easy it is after all for a common-place man to be a Home Secretary, Cross is pert, and crushes Cawley or makes refractory Sir William Fraser. Even Gathorne Hardy has tamed his impetuous spirit, and with all his natural contempt for a Radical has been studiously polite to members below the gangway opposite. The only member of the Ministry whose constitutional snappishness has proved indestructible is Ward Hunt.

With other members of his Ministry Disraeli has no trouble in this direction. Stafford Northcote is ever courteous; Manners is, in a skim-milk manner, always unoffending; Adderley could not get his thoughts together quick enough to be snappish to any questioner except Plimsoll, and the member for Derby providentially always taps his thoughts in the same place; Lord Henry Lennox is not only polite, but manages to convey the impression that he is unaffectedly desirous of meeting the views of the gentleman addressing him, whoever he may be; Selwin-Ibbetson is of no account under any circumstances; whilst Lord Sandon and Bourke are gentlemen by nature, and invariably behave as such.

Matters being thus moulded by right hon. gentlemen on the Treasury bench, they are not much marred by right hon. gentlemen on the front Opposition bench. The part the latter take in the affairs of the House is in truth infinitesimal. It was below the gangway that the only serious opposition to a Government measure—the Regimental Exchanges Bill—had its birth, and it is from below the gangway that such obstruction as Disraeli finds chiefly comes. Hartington is not, on an average,

in his place two hours per sitting, and when he is there others speak for the leader of the Opposition. Forster is present pretty regularly, and is sure to be found on his feet if educational legislation crops up, or the Ballot Act is discussed, and an opportunity thus afforded for eulogising the actions and glorifying the motives of the ex-Vice-President of the Council. In the same way Goschen is there to see that no injustice is done to the ex-First Lord of the Admiralty, and Childers will not sit silent and hear a word said against the condition of her Majesty's fleet or dockyards between the years 1868 and 1871.

Sometimes Lowe, with a refreshing self-respect and an exhilarating mental vigour, letting the dead past bury its dead, runs amuck at the Ministry, and sends through the House an unaccustomed and dangerous thrill of suspicion that perhaps after all we are living in a fool's paradise; that peradventure this is not the best of Ministries, nor these the best of times; and that, heavily dozing under the wand of a clever enchanter, we are, if moving anywhither, moving backwards. But for the rest, the occupants of the front Opposition bench, animated by petty jealousies of each other, unmindful of the cause to which they have bound themselves, come and go fitfully, without common purpose or bond of union, and Disraeli tranquilly leads as he pleases.

CHAPTER VI.

DR. KENEALY.

Death of John Martin—"The unhappy Nobleman languishing in Prison"—The Power of Commonplace—The Burials Bill—Mr. Biggar's four Hours' Speech—Kenealy and the Judges—The Major on Threatening Letters—Biggar "spies Strangers"—On answering Questions.

Easter Monday. John Martin, sometime member for County
 —Death of Meath, died this morning. There are many
 John Martin. men left in the House of Commons with far
 more common sense, more business capacity, and a larger share
 of intelligence than John Martin had. One of his compatriots
 has estimated the money value of an Irish member's seat in the

House at the modest sum of £500 per annum. But I believe that John Martin would have consented to wear kid gloves on his hands for a twelvemonth rather than make a shilling by his services to his country. Possibly if Ireland had offered him £2,000 a year not to represent her in Parliament, but to go away and live quietly in Florida, raising his own oranges, and, if he pleased, throwing them at wax-work images of the Saxon Oppressor, he would, by accepting the offer, have shown himself truly patriotic. He did not advance the prosperity of Ireland by his presence here; rather the reverse. He was a poor speaker, a purblind patriot, and as ignorant of the actual proportion and mutual bearing of current events as a boarding-school miss. But withal he was simple, earnest, and single-minded; and simplicity, earnestness, and single-mindedness are qualities so rare in the House of Commons that we can ill spare John Martin.

Apr. 15.—“The unhappynobleman languishing in prison.” The House, in anticipation of the double attraction of the statement on the Budget and of a controversy in which the Premier and Kenealy might be engaged, was densely crowded, floor and galleries being alike filled. That one feature in the entertainment of the evening would not be lacking was assured shortly before four o'clock, when Kenealy entered and took his seat, as far from the door as the limits of the chamber would permit. Usually he has sat just behind the leader of the Opposition. Last night he took up a position on the seat beyond, and still more distant from the door. Without notable exception all the members of the Government, and also right hon. gentlemen who formed the late Administration, were early in their places. Of the latter Gladstone was one of the last to arrive, taking his seat as usual at the obscurer end of the front Opposition bench, next to Bright.

The Premier moved that the report of the Select Committee on the petition presented from Prittlewell be read at the table. This done, the Premier described the nature of the petition, which he observed might, if any member desired, be read by the Clerk. With respect to passages of the document which alleged dishonest and corrupt motives on the part of the judges, he would not have been inclined to put too strict an

interpretation on them, supposing they had been distinct, not vague, and supposing the member who presented the petition were prepared to support its prayer. It was the concluding portion of the petition, which called upon the House to take measures for the impeachment of Mr. Speaker, that was the grave feature in it. The question was one of privilege, "a serious and deliberate attack on the freedom of speech in the House of Commons." Whether such an attack was made by mobs or by monarchs did not make much difference. It was a matter that could not be passed over by the House, and accordingly he moved that the order that the petition should lie upon the table be rescinded.

Loud cheers endorsed this proposal, and amid the demonstration Colonel Makins, who had presented the petition, rose, and in the frankest possible manner explained how he had got himself and the House into such a difficulty. Just before Easter one of his constituents had written to him, and asked whether he would present a petition for the release "of that unhappy nobleman now languishing in prison," meaning the convict Orton, at Dartmoor. This he consented to do, and had done without very carefully studying the document, and he now expressed his great regret for the circumstance. It was after eight o'clock, and Budget night too, before the motion was agreed to, and the House, having been already detained long past the dinner hour, immediately emptied, something less than fifty members remaining to hear the statement on the Budget. To this, perhaps the smallest audience which a Chancellor of the Exchequer had addressed under similar circumstances, Northcote disclosed the secrets of his Second Budget.

Apr. 20. — The power of commonplace.

M'Cullagh Torrens has just risen to state his views on army organisation. The member for Finsbury is an undoubted power in the House.

But unless the far-reaching dominion of commonplace be recognised it is difficult to discover the secret of his influence. It is true he is able to state familiar truths with an impressiveness not given to every man. For example, one possibly has a dim recollection of having before heard warnings against the evil or danger of procrastination. But never was the truth

brought home with such impressive force as it was to those in the House of Commons who heard Torrens to-night. He has many special personal qualifications for his calling. There is a sad, sorrowful look about his visage, that speaks of much soul-wrestling before these truths were seared upon his heart. There is as he speaks a something in his profile which recalls that of an elderly parrot who has attended many funerals.

Newdegate is a mournful personage. But his melancholy has withal a certain vigour, and he can on occasion show that sorrow has not sapped his bones. If we say that Newdegate is the Melancholy Jaques of the House and Torrens is its Jeremiah, we shall get as nearly as possible exact parallels of their varied manifestations of prevailing woe. But sometimes gleams of humour break through the cloud of his anguish, and he is well known in Warwickshire as one of the straightest riders that ever followed the hounds, while Torrens never doffs his sables for scarlet coat or other flippery. To the charm of this manner he adds the possession of a voice whose tones alternate between a discordant shriek and a whisper that makes the very flesh creep.

“The way to keep the peace is to let your neighbours see that you are able to go to war.”

That is a sentence from his speech to-night. It may be objected that there is nothing fresh either in the idea or the expression, the two having been in their wedded state familiar ever since Napoleon was First Consul of France. Ah! but you did not hear Torrens say it to-night, beginning with the whisper and ending with the shriek, the while he leaned across the bench before him and shook his forefinger at the awed group of members who sit below the gangway on the Ministerial side.

Apr. 21. — The
Burials Bill.

Gladstone and Bright both spoke this afternoon on Osborne Morgan's Burial Bill; the first early, the other late. Apart from the conception and spirit of his speech, Bright has not spoken so well since his return to Parliament after his long illness. Hitherto, when he has addressed the House, it has been with a feebleness of voice, a nervousness of manner, and even a hesitancy of speech, that made sad those

who remembered the nights when, like a strong man armed, he kept the House in thrall. Up to to-day he had not this session raised his voice above the low yet audible pitch of conversation, and whilst speaking he has stood immobile, with one hand resting on the table. This afternoon there was the old familiar ring in his voice, and with the more animated manner came back the few effective gestures with which he was wont to emphasise his speech.

He accidentally made an effective point by a momentary lack of a word he was in search of. Dealing with the state of affairs in Scotland, he had occasion to refer to the fact that the graveyards in that country are not specially set apart by episcopal sanction.

"Well, but hon. gentlemen opposite will get up and say that in Scotland their ground is not—is not—what do they call it?" he added, sharply turning to the gentleman just behind him.

"Consecrated," replied Gladstone, who happened to be the gentleman addressed.

"—Is not consecrated," Bright continued, amid laughter and loud cheering from the Liberal benches.

The division took place immediately after this speech, and the result showing a majority of 14 against the Bill, in a House of 482 members, was hailed with protracted cheering from the Opposition.

By an odd coincidence, Gladstone, of whom it has not been a complaint that he lacked animation when addressing the House, was singularly lifeless and dull. Probably the aspect of the House had something to do with his humour, and it must be admitted that an audience of some forty members, with Sir John Holker as sole representative of a great Ministry, is not a spectacle calculated to rouse a man to the passion of eloquence. Gladstone might have waited for three or four hours, as Bright did, and he would then have found the inspiration of a crowded House. But he had an engagement elsewhere, and having also a speech, he delivered the latter in conversational fashion, holding his walking-stick in his hand by way of protest against the supposition that he was making a speech, and wearing one of those curiously old and ill-fitting gloves he affects.

Apr. 22. — Mr. Biggar's four hours' speech. The first order of the day was for going into Committee on the Peace Preservation (Ireland) Bill, a proposal which Biggar met by a hostile amendment. Having fortified himself with a large collection of papers and blue books, he began to speak at five o'clock, and by eight had talked out of the House every member save eight, two of whom were fast asleep. The purport of his speech was very difficult to make out, his remarks being broken up by the reading of long extracts from notes of evidence taken in various places on divers subjects. One pleasant little interlude was afforded by his reading through from preamble to schedule a long Act of Parliament.

A few minutes after eight the Speaker's attention was called to the numbers present, and preparations were made for a count. Considerable sensation was created by the spectacle of Biggar hastily collecting his papers together, picking up his glass of water, and fleeing towards the door. His progress was arrested by Sir Joseph M'Kenna when he had got as far as the Serjeant-at-Arms' chair, and an animated conversation took place. Apparently Biggar was arguing that if he went away it would reduce by one the chance of a House being made, whilst Sir Joseph pointed out that if a House were made, and Biggar was not in his place, the Speaker would call upon some one else, and the conclusion of Biggar's remarks would thus be lost. Whatever was the argument used, it prevailed over Biggar's earlier impulse towards flight, and he returned, bringing his sheaves of paper with him, and also the glass of water.

The great influx of members in response to the bell that signalled the "count" showed that the Government had profited by the experience of the night when the second reading of the Peace Preservation Bill was moved, and were not again to be caught napping. Between sixty and seventy members flocked in, and it could be seen through the opened doors that the lobby was thronged. The sitting was accordingly resumed, and Biggar, refreshed by the few minutes of rest, returned to the reading of the evidence. His voice, never very clear, had unmistakably begun to fail him, and at a quarter to nine the Speaker, rising to order, called his attention to the rule that required members to address the chair, "and," he added, "the observations of the hon. member have not reached me for some time past."

"Well, sir, I'll come across," replied Biggar, taking up his glass of water, crossing the gangway, and walking up the empty passage behind the front Opposition bench.

His voice, however, got weaker and weaker, and though there remained unread at least twenty pages of the bulky blue-book he held in his hand, he sat down at five minutes to nine o'clock, having occupied the time of the House for four hours less ten minutes.

At midnight O'Leary moved the adjournment of the debate, a proposition Disraeli good-humouredly combated. O'Gorman immediately followed the Premier, but though his interposition was welcomed by a loud cheer, he contented himself with the bare declaration of his intention to support the motion for the adjournment. Hartington suggested that as the House had had the patience to listen to Biggar for four hours, it might perhaps be inclined to sit for some hours longer, to give Irish members an opportunity of saying what they had at heart to say—a suggestion endorsed by general cheering. Butt supporting the motion for the adjournment, the House divided, and the motion was negatived by 245 votes against 63. On the announcement of the figures, O'Gorman rose, and moved the adjournment of the House. He took the opportunity of informing Parliament, and acquainting the right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government, that if the liberties of his country were to be destroyed by a despotic and insolent majority, "those liberties," he repeated in a profound voice, "those liberties shall die hard."

Disraeli said after the tragic declaration they had just heard, the House would probably not be in a position to continue the debate, and accordingly, the Major having with some difficulty been induced to withdraw his motion for the adjournment of the House, on the clear understanding that the adjournment of the debate should be agreed to, the latter course was adopted, it being twenty minutes past one in the morning.

Apr. 23.—Kenealy and the Judges. House crowded to-night to hear Kenealy move for a Royal Commission to inquire into the conduct of the judges in the Tichborne case. He began by explaining that he had moved for a Royal Commission rather than a Select Committee because he had grave doubts of the possibility of members of the House of Commons coming to

a fair decision, seeing that they were so hopelessly prejudiced. Next he made it clear that he had not been moved to take the prominent part he had assumed in the cause by any wonderful admiration of his late client. During the course of the trial he had made no secret of the fact that "the man" was no hero to him. He had undertaken the office of advocate as a matter of duty, and if he had declined it he would have been a traitor to every principle of right and every principle of honour. He did not intend to re-try the Tichborne case in the House of Commons, nor did he intend to go into all the technicalities of the law of the case. That, he added, amid loud laughter, he would leave to any little pettifogging lawyer who might follow him.

After this exordium he proceeded to dwell upon the popular agitation which, he showed, commencing at the period when after the trial in the *Nisi Prius* Court the Claimant went through the country and was received as if he were an emperor or a king, had risen like a mountain stream, and had now grown to the dimensions of a mountain torrent that rolled over all the land, and had, incidentally, placed the present Government in power and banished Gladstone and his Ministry from the Treasury Bench. After stating some grounds of alleged resemblance between "the cases of Cochrane and Tichborne," he proceeded, notwithstanding his promise not to re-try the case, to state "a few reasons" why he believed the Claimant was Tichborne. There was some laughter when he slowly and impressively stated as the first reason for his belief that "a more perfect gentleman in manner than Tichborne never crossed the drawing-room." But this was instantly repressed, and the House listened with patience to the familiar story of Lady Tichborne's recognition of "her son," and to a minute examination of the Claimant's hair, at various stages of his progress from Australia to Milbank. Encouraged by the laughter which a personal hit at Lowe drew from members below the gangway on the Ministerial side, he entered upon a bantering attack upon the party amongst whom he stood, and gave them some advice as to their future conduct, which fell rather flat.

The House slightly thinned during a wearisome review of the Pittendreigh forgeries, and Sir John Coleridge's alleged guilty knowledge of them. Attention was momentarily re-

aroused by the reading of a letter dated 14th November, 1873, which, he said, the Claimant had personally addressed to Gladstone, then Prime Minister, protesting against the appointment of Coleridge to the Lord Chief Justiceship. "That letter," he gravely added amid suppressed laughter, "failed to produce any effect, and Coleridge was appointed to the vacant judgeship." A reference to a statement alleged to have been made by S. Morley brought up that member with the emphatic declaration that it was "perfectly untrue." The Speaker pointed out that it would be open to Morley to make any statement he pleased when Kenealy had finished. Kenealy, who in the excitement of the moment had got out on to the gangway and was re-called by cries of "Order!" quietly observed that whether it was true or false was a matter for the hon. member to settle with his constituents.

At twenty minutes past six Kenealy, summing up some of the reasons why the Royal Commission he asked for should be granted, gave the general impression that he had reached the close of his address, an impression confirmed by his turning round and arranging his papers as if about to resume his seat. But it turned out that he was only about to approach what he called the second part of his case, namely, the conduct of the judges at the trial at bar. He dwelt upon this at some length, alleging a long series of instances of the hostile feeling of the presiding judge towards his client, and characterising his charge to the jury as "the most one-sided summing up he had ever heard." At twenty minutes to eight he concluded his address without any attempt at peroration, having spoken for three hours less five minutes before a perfectly silent and attentive audience.

Whalley seconded the motion for a Royal Commission, and the question being put, the Attorney-General rose to reply. Morley, however, claimed precedence on a personal question, and this being conceded, he repeated with circumstance his emphatic denial of Kenealy's statement that he (Morley) had told some of his constituents at Bristol that Sir John Coleridge did not believe that the Claimant was Arthur Orton. Another of the statements relied upon by the Prittlewell and other petitioners was disposed of by Milbank, who introduced some warmth into the proceedings by his protest against

the manner in which Kenealy had made use of Mrs. Milbank's name to support the charge against the Lord Chief Justice. A letter read from Lord Rivers to Kenealy on this subject indicated that there was a split in the Tichborne camp—at least, Lord Rivers intimated that he could not reconcile Kenealy's conduct in this matter with his notions of a man of honour and a gentleman.

The Attorney-General replied with comparative brevity, declaring that Kenealy had shown no grounds for the granting of the Royal Commission for which he moved. Whalley made a long and discursive speech. Henry James rose from the front Opposition bench, and delivered an elaborate reply against the case presented by Kenealy. He construed the meaning of the resolution as being that the House of Commons were invited as a grand jury to return a true bill against the judges, a result which he ventured to characterise as an attack upon the institution of trial by jury. The House of Commons, he argued, had no jurisdiction in the matter, and he challenged Kenealy to cite a single precedent of such a resolution as he had submitted.

Just on the stroke of eleven o'clock Disraeli began in a somewhat stiff and laboured manner to criticise the speech of the member for Stoke. But as he proceeded he warmed to the subject, and in his most animated and effective manner ridiculed the sort of evidence and argument which Kenealy had brought forward in support of his charge against the judges. After passing a high eulogium on the character and ability of the Lord Chief Justice, he urged that, in considering his lordship's conduct off the bench, it was necessary to take into account his idiosyncrasies. He was a genial and social man, who did not enter a saloon with Rhadamantine gravity. And he asked, amid loud cheers, were the casual conversations of such a man to be made the foundation for the gravest charges brought forward in one of the gravest assemblies in the world? He humorously described the Lord Chief Justice's endeavours to fence Mrs. Milbank's questions about Lord Rivers's friends, and his final failure. He recited the laughing answer—"Tell Lord Rivers, with my compliments, that he will have to accompany his friend into penal servitude"—and then, dropping his voice to its profoundest depth, and stretching out his hands, he cried in scornful tones—

"For this all England is agitated, for this we are dancing upon a volcano, for this the morrow is big with fate, and, perhaps this House may never assemble again."

Bright, who followed, avowedly devoted himself to the task of addressing the crowd outside, who were accustomed to hear the merits of the Tichborne trial discussed only by Kenealy and his friends, and, like Disraeli, he was loudly cheered on resuming his seat. After some remarks in reply from Kenealy, the division was called at twenty minutes past twelve. The first time the question was put from the chair Kenealy alone cried "Aye!" On the question being repeated, he was silent, and there appeared a prospect of the resolutions being negatived without a division. But Whalley came up with the reserves, and persistently calling out "Aye!" the House was cleared for a division.

During the interval, and before the question was put again, Whalley and the member for Stoke held a brief conference, the result of which was shown by their both calling out "Aye" when the question was finally put. The House accordingly divided, and whilst all the crowd thronged into the "No" lobby, considerable anxiety was displayed as to who might go with the "Ayes." A group of members assembled at the head of the lobby, and presently a ringing cheer was heard. A few seconds later, the burly figure of Major O'Gorman hove in sight, the hon. and gallant gentleman cheerily waving his hat in response to the applause and laughter.

This was the only support Kenealy received, and when Mr. Winn, with commendable grammatical accuracy, announced that "the *Aye* to the right is *one*, the *Noes* to the left are 433," the result was greeted with loud laughter, in which the Major, Kenealy, and everybody else heartily joined.

Apr. 23. — The
Major on
threatening
letters.

O'Gorman resumed the debate on the motion to go into Committee on the Peace Preservation (Ireland) Act. The Major was loudly cheered on presenting himself, but he was, particularly at the outset, scarcely so completely master of the House as he is when, according to his custom, he speaks nearer the mellow hours of midnight. As he proceeded, however, he warmed to his theme, and made a great point by the recital of an anecdote about "a singularly beautiful girl," who wanted her father to

leave his country house in Westmeath and go and live in Dublin. The father, who was fond of field sports, declined to move to the town, and after for some time persisting in his resolve, he began to receive threatening letters, purporting to come from the Ribbonmen. Still he would not go; and finally he received a letter "delineating his coffin." Then he got frightened, went off to Dublin, and permanently took up his residence there. In a short time the daughter married, and after the breakfast—for, as the Major added parenthetically, "of course there was a breakfast"—the girl threw her arms round her father's neck, and confessed that it was she who had written all those letters, and had "delineated her father's coffin."

From this story the Major argued that threatening letters were myths in Ireland, and he put it to Disraeli, as "the foremost man in the world," whether he would not refuse to take over a legacy like this "from those blockheaded Whigs." The Major did not leave any ambiguity as to whom he might mean by this phrase, which gained considerable effect from being delivered in a thunderous voice, for he pointed straight down at the front Opposition bench. The season was at hand for slaughtering the innocents.

"Let the right hon. gentleman, I beseech him, begin by slaughtering this guilty Bill. The altar is before him, let him immolate this Bill." With which remark the Major, coming abruptly to a conclusion, resumed his seat.

Apr. 27.—Biggar
"spice stran-
gers."

The afternoon questions over, the Speaker was about to call on the first motion, that of Chaplin, with respect to horses, when Biggar, who had made several attempts to catch the right hon. gentleman's eye, finally succeeded, and created a profound sensation by observing that he "believed there were strangers in the House." This action, utterly unpresaged by notice, and absolutely unexpected, was received in dismayed silence. After a few seconds' pause the Speaker rose, and said—

"Do I understand that the hon. member for Cavan persists in his intention of noticing strangers?"

"If you please, Mr. Speaker," replied Mr. Biggar, and the House, recovering its voice, broke forth in a loud and prolonged

groan, amid which the sound, perhaps unprecedented in the House of Commons, of hissing was heard from some members below the gangway on the Ministerial side.

"In that case," rejoined the Speaker, "I have no option but to order that strangers should withdraw."

The galleries over the clock happened to be specially crowded. In the Peers' Gallery were the Prince of Wales, the Earl of Shrewsbury and Talbot, Lord Lucan, Lord Grey de Wilton, and other peers, attracted by the debate on Chaplin's motion. The German ambassador occupied a seat over the clock. The Prince, the peers, and the ambassador, of course, came under the common term of "strangers," and met the common fate. The only persons other than members allowed to remain in the House were the ladies in the cage over the press gallery.

As soon as the last stranger had disappeared, and all the doors were locked, Disraeli approached the table, and was received with a loud outburst of cheering. The Premier, who did not attempt to disguise the strong feeling under which he laboured, said with much vehemence that there might be occasions when it was for the good of the public service that the rule which prohibited the presence of strangers at their debates should be put in force. But he very strongly reprobated that rule being exercised simply to gratify the caprice of a single member. The House of Commons was, possibly with the fewest exceptions, an assemblage of gentlemen, and he trusted that whatever political changes might take place it would so remain. He did not hesitate to say that the course taken by the member for Cavan was discreditable. Fortunately the rules of the House left in his hands a means of combating such a capricious action, and he should avail himself of them by moving that the order which required strangers to withdraw during the debate should be suspended for to-night.

This proposal was greeted with loud cheers, renewed when Hartington seconded the motion, observing that he could not see upon what grounds or upon what pretext Biggar had taken the action. Newdegate, whose Monastic and Conventual Bill stood first on the orders, said he was one of the Select Committee appointed several sessions ago to inquire into the working of this rule, and had voted for its retention. He now appeared much shaken in his conviction of its desirability, and solemnly asked

Biggar "why he had put it in action." Thus adjured, Biggar rose, and in a hurried, scarcely coherent manner, explained that the course he had taken was simply and purely in "the interests of the Press." Sullivan had given notice of his intention to "see strangers," but he had withdrawn it at the instance of Hartington. Dillwyn had now withdrawn the motion of which he had given notice, and so Biggar had stepped into the breach. He now, amid loud groans and other vocal signs of dissent and disapprobation, in shrill tones declared that he would "do it every night." Dillwyn explained that he had not withdrawn his amendment, but had simply postponed it for a moment, "and," he added, "unless the House in the meantime comes to some satisfactory conclusion, I shall certainly bring it on."

Dodson suggested that as Biggar had declared his intention of pursuing a similar course on each succeeding evening, it might be well to extend the terms of the resolution before the House by adding the words "until further notice." Bryan, rising from the ranks of the Home Rule party, indignantly, and amid renewed cheering, repudiated any connection with Biggar in this matter.

"I think," said Bryan in a loud voice, "that a man should be a gentleman first and a patriot after," a sentiment which drew forth a fresh burst of cheering.

Bowyer and Brooks having also washed their hands of any connection with Biggar, Ronayne said he thought there had been repudiation enough, and he, for one, would stand by Biggar. Fay also, though in a less emphatic manner, defended his colleague, laying stress on the circumstance that Biggar had not, when he moved, been aware of the presence of "an exalted personage" amongst the strangers. Lowe took the opportunity of announcing on the part of Hartington that he was quite prepared to carry out his pledge to bring forward a resolution dealing with the matter, and was even now engaged in considering the terms of it.

The motion to suspend the rule excluding strangers from the debate was then put from the chair, and was met with a loud and general shout of "Aye!" Biggar did not oppose it, and it was declared carried. The Speaker ordered the doors to be thrown open, and the members of the Press and other "strangers" returned, amongst the first to enter being the Prince of Wales, who

had surveyed the scene from the doorway under the gallery. Prince Christian had arrived in the meantime, and now took his seat with the rest in the Peers' gallery. Chaplin at once proceeded with his motion, by which he desired to direct the attention of the Government to the national importance of taking such steps as might be desirable to prevent the deterioration of "the stock of horses which remains." At the outset he observed that a more uncalled for, a more unwarranted, a more offensive mode of interrupting business than that from which they had just suffered he did not remember.

"The hon. member for Cavan," he added amid cheers, "appears to forget that he is now admitted to the society of gentlemen"—a rebuke at which Biggar audibly chuckled.

May 3.—On answering questions. Disraeli has recently rather conspicuously bent his energies in the direction of pointedly answering questions put to him from all quarters of the House, and his rising has come to be looked forward to with intense interest by a body of gentlemen of whom it might sometimes be thought that their dearest wish in life was to be amused. His answer the other night to a question put to him about the relations between Germany and Belgium was very good, except that the joke was manufactured on exactly the same lines as were used for the one with which he turned aside a question put a week earlier on the relations between Belgium and Germany. In cases like these the Premier begins by gravely repeating the terms of the question. Next he proceeds to criticise their construction, and to hint that they are not so precise as the magnitude of the interests discussed requires. Having thus given importance to the question by a display of anxiety that there should be no misunderstanding as to its bearings, he in his most solemn manner heaps together in a sonorous sentence all the biggest words that occur to him in connection with the subject; and having by these tricks led the House up to a pitch of expectation that an important declaration is about to be made, he suddenly drops his voice, quickens his utterance, and attains an absurd anti-climax by the enunciation of some rounded period signifying nothing.

Ward Hunt rather affects Lowe's mannerism in answering questions; but, owing to difference in mental calibre, where Lowe

was snappish and witty, Ward Hunt is only snappish and rude. Selater-Booth, when answering a question, suggests the image of a fountain discharging a stream of water. He always stands in exactly the same position, with a piece of paper in his right hand, his body erect, head slightly thrown back, face absolutely expressionless, and flow of words copious and fluent. Gathorne Hardy replies seriously, and very often with point. John Manners takes an exceedingly plain, not to say feeble, view of matters brought under his notice, and does not always succeed in impressing the House with the conviction that he knows something about them.

But the most delightful answerer of questions, as far as manner is concerned, is the First Commissioner of Works. Lord Henry Lennox finds his seat at the obscurer end of the Treasury bench, and when the bench is crowded, as it naturally is at question time, he has quite a long and difficult journey to accomplish before he emerges into full view at the table. He comes up with a refreshing briskness, skirting the ponderous person of the First Lord of the Admiralty with a little skip that is not the only thing to remind one of Lord Dundreary, and gracefully laying his hat on the table, begins his reply always in exactly the same terms, which are too evidently modelled upon the form of correspondence prepared for use in Government offices.

“Mr. Speaker, sir: in reply to the question of my hon. friend the member for Mid London, I have to state that—”

It is a peculiarity which Henry Lennox shares with perhaps five other men in the House, that he can refer to members sitting in all parts of the House as his hon. or right hon. *friend*. Such a pleasant circumstance is the natural result of an invariably frank and courteous manner of speech. The First Commissioner of Works not only makes himself thoroughly master of the matters which are from time to time brought under his notice at the question hour, but he succeeds in conveying his official views and intentions thereon in a modest, clear, intelligent, and courteous way.

CHAPTER VII.

STORMS BREWING.

Parliament and the Press—The Major as Aristides—Gladstone roused—McCarthy Downing rebuked—Don Quixote, M.P.—The Major tries to “make a House”—Sir Charles Adderley and the Merchant Shipping Bill—Total Collapse—Disraeli’s Decline—Lawyers in Parliament—A County Member—Parliamentary Jesters.

May 4.—Parliament and the Press. Early in the Session Charles Lewis, who came in with the new Parliament for Londonderry, achieved much personal notoriety by bringing the printers of the *Times* and the *Daily News* to the bar of the House, on a charge of breach of privilege in connection with reporting the proceedings of the Select Committee on Foreign Loans. After some insignificant proceedings the printers were begged to go away, and the incident dropped. But it raised the burning question of the relations of the Press and Parliament, and led to a series of lamentable scenes, of which Biggar’s escapade the other night is a sample. To-night Hartington brought forward a series of resolutions designed to set the relations of the Parliament towards the Press upon a more modern common-sense footing than they were left by the still unrepealed standing order which makes it a breach of privilege to report the proceedings of the House. In the course of an erudite speech Hartington observed that by keeping on their books a rule which ignored the presence of an agency to which members and the public were alike greatly indebted, they were placing themselves in a false position. The resolution he submitted formed rather a rule for the guidance of the House than an alteration of the law which related to the relations of Parliament and the Press.

Mitchell Henry was able to speak in the most hopeful manner of the possibility of Biggar’s ultimately “conforming himself to the atmosphere of the House,” and hoped that the House would not lay too much stress upon what had lately taken place, and would refrain from “legislating in a panic.” Amid many evidences of impatience, he sketched a plan of reform in the

reporting of the debates, the main feature of which was that there was to be an official reporter who, sitting in the House all night, was, single-handed, to take a verbatim report of the debates, which report was to be published *in extenso* at the expense of the nation, and, Henry said, the newspapers would compile from this volume such report as they desired to give!

An amusing scene occurred towards the close of his remarks. "I have shown clearly," he said, whereupon a loud shout of "No," burst forth. "I have shown clearly," he repeated, and again the merry shout of "No, no," responded. He gallantly stuck at it for some minutes; but in the end numbers prevailed, and before he was allowed to proceed he was fain to modify his statement, and put it that he had "endeavoured" to show clearly.

Disraeli said when he had been asked by Sullivan to take up this matter he had declined, because he had not felt qualified to deal with a subject which had baffled persons more competent than himself to grapple with it. What Mitchell Henry and Newdegate wanted was, he said, amid prolonged laughter, "a Speech Preservation Act." He was not prepared to support the proposal, and as far as the general question raised by Hartington's motion was concerned, he was of the opinion that after all the difficulty was not so real, and that when it did arise, the House had within its grasp a sufficient means for its prompt and ready removal. Lowe caustically illustrated the benefits of the system which the Premier had lauded by citing the recent case of breach of privilege, in which, he said, the representatives of two journals had been dragged to the bar of the House by a process unknown elsewhere in the country, whilst it was acknowledged on all hands that they were innocent of fault.

Lowe, who had been loudly cheered by the Opposition throughout his speech, was followed by Gathorne Hardy. But before he had completed his opening sentence Sullivan rose, and with a sweep of his hand towards the Press Gallery said—

"Mr. Speaker, I espy strangers over your chair!"

Loud and repeated cheering from the Opposition followed this movement, the applause being renewed again and again when the Speaker, observing that he "had no alternative but to order strangers to withdraw," gave the necessary directions.

This was at twenty minutes past twelve, and the House re-

mained with closed doors for upwards of an hour. In the interim Hartington justified the course Sullivan had taken, while Gathorne Hardy attempted to smooth over the difficulty by moving the adjournment of the debate.

The Premier had said the difficulty was not real, and when it did arise the House could promptly deal with it. And here, peremptorily closing the mouth of a Cabinet Minister and upsetting the whole arrangement of the House, was a single member demanding that the galleries should be cleared. No swifter or more crushing reply was ever given to an empty argument, nor has Parliament ever witnessed a speech answered with such dramatic effect.

May 5. — The All afternoon on the Irish Sunday Closing Bill. The Major, who, speaking early in the afternoon, had not the crowded audience which usually hangs upon his utterances in the House, was very emphatic in his opposition to what he called "a puny Bill, a half-and-half measure." That in assuming this decided position he was not free from personal risk he did not hesitate to declare to the House. There were, he said, persons who "called themselves" his constituents, who had not hesitated to threaten him with their opposition when he presented himself for re-election.

"Let it be so," added the Major, with simple dignity. "The Athenians ostracised Aristides. I am ready to be ostracised by my countrymen for a similar reason."

May 7. — Gladstone roused. Gladstone's retirement from the leadership of the Liberal party is much such another withdrawal from the conduct of affairs as the captain of a ship effects when he turns in for the night. The first mate is left in charge of the ship, but on the slightest emergency the captain is to be called. To-night Gladstone was called out on the Budget resolutions, and came up fresher and more vigorous than he often was in the more recent days of his nominal command. In the many personal encounters which have passed between himself and Disraeli, it has, in eight cases out of ten, been the latter who was the aggressor. Gladstone is very rarely given to personal attacks in Parliament; most of the passages that will be best remembered in Disraeli's history are personal hits at his adversaries or his

political friends—it has not always mattered which, as the Marquis of Salisbury could testify. To-night Gladstone, perhaps unusually moved by the Premier's untold iniquity in proposing a morning sitting for the discussion of a financial measure, was very lively in his thrusts at "the right hon. gentleman the member for Buckinghamshire," as, with a marked avoidance of the ordinary mode of referring in debate to the Prime Minister, he persistently called him.

All the while he was speaking Disraeli sat furtively glancing at his ancient rival, who after a delusive abdication had come back again to the very steps of the throne, and conclusively showed to-night that, notwithstanding the leasing of his town residence and the sale of his china, it would not be safe to reckon without him.

May 10.—McCarthy Downing rebuked.

On the termination of the labours of the Committee on the Peace Preservation Bill, McCarthy Downing expressed his acknowledgments of the courtesy with which the debate had been conducted by the Government. It seems that since then Biggar and O'Gorman, moved by a common impulse, have written asking by what authority he made such a statement on the part of the Irish members without consulting them. Downing now proposed to read his reply to O'Gorman, whereupon the Major, "rising to order," demanded that his letter should be read too. This done, Downing read his reply, the point of which was that he had made the acknowledgment not for all the Irish members, but for some of them. Hereupon the Major rose again, and requested Downing "to read his answer to *that* letter." An indefinite vista of letters and rejoinders thus opening up, a protest was successfully raised.

Then Biggar, prefacing his rising by calling out, "A personal statement, if you please, Mr. Speaker," proceeded when on his feet to observe that "in justice to the House and himself," his letter to Downing should be read "*verbattim*." The strong emphasis laid upon the second syllable of the word thus spelled gave rise to a burst of laughter, which lasted some time. The Speaker, interposing, ruled that Biggar had already exceeded the limit of debate, and, after some words from Ronayne, who incidentally likened McCarthy Downing to a

convict at the gallows and her Majesty's Ministers to Calcraft, the matter dropped.

May 23. — Don Quixote, M.P. If Whalley had lived three hundred years ago, he might have realised the fancy of Cervantes, and ridden forth with helmet on head and lance in hand, a flesh-and-blood Don Quixote. He is quite as addle-pated as the immortal knight of La Mancha, and is scarcely less simple-hearted, less chivalrous, or less valorous. In an age when all mankind is striving for place or power or gold or fine feathers, Whalley is a person who should be cherished and dealt tenderly with. All his life he has been fighting windmills, bruising himself against the stone walls of the mill, and being battered by the sails, simply because where other men saw windmills he beheld "monstrous giants," and held with Don Quixote that he would be "doing God good service to remove so wicked a generation off the face of the earth." It has been in vain that the Sancho Panzas of the world have insisted that the giants were only windmills. Whalley has steadfastly answered, "If thou art afraid, get thee aside and pray, whilst I engage with them in fierce and unequal combat."

Up to within recent years it was the priests who were his monstrous giants, and night and day he fought against them, coming up smiling time after time when he had been knocked over by the long arms of ridicule and contempt. He had his mission committed to him, and he performed it; and though we may smile at his lack of sense, let us do honour to his courage and self-devotion. A fresh evil spirit has entered into him now, and his last state threatens to be sevenfold worse than his first. Twice he was up to-night; once with a long speech, in which, patiently facing the storm of laughter and contumely that greeted his rising, he once more pleaded the cause of "the unhappy man now in Dartmoor Prison."

I have never felt inclined to laugh at Whalley, being sad rather, and the sentiment is deepened when I see this *preux chevalier* made the tool of so contemptible and gross a creature as Kenealy. Whilst the "member for Stoke" is away in the provinces, filling his pockets with the coppers of the working classes, poor Whalley is pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for him at Westminster. It is a saddening spectacle; and the

growing signs of the coming end are welcome. Born out of due season, Whalley may not be a Don Quixote, and so has degenerated into a Mr. Dick. Do not his best friends think the time has come when he should be handed over to the care of Betsy Trotwood?

June 17. — The Major tries to "make a House." At least a week before the adjournment for the Whitsuntide recess the figure of Major O'Gorman faded from the House. He had been toiling terribly during the debates on the Coercion Act, walking in and out for the momentary divisions with all the tireless vigour of an elephant in its native jungle, and it was not strange that he should forestall the holidays. To-night he has come back, and the House smiles again. It was a little after eleven o'clock, and Kenealy was on his feet, with a large sheaf of notes, and the plainly expressed determination to make a long speech on introducing a Bill for triennial Parliaments. The House, having endured on Friday an oration from this truculent and empty adventurer, was not able to stand another day; and so with one accord the large majority walked out, leaving a score of gentlemen on the benches. It being yet early, there was a large attendance of members, and they lingered in the lobby to watch the issue of the pending count. Quite a throng of men were standing at the door, laughing and chatting, and straining their necks to look into the House without catching the Speaker's eye.

A count was called, the bells carrying the news to the uttermost nooks of the building. Suddenly the floor of the lobby vibrated to a well-known tread, the doors of the corridor leading from the dining-room were thrown back, and forth came the Major, panting and puffing and glowing with the consciousness of a great purpose.

Charging among the crowd that stood in the doorway, the Major scattered them right and left as if they were ninepins. In vain they tried to bar the way, and laughingly urged him to stay with them. His brow was stern, his eye beneath flashed like a falchion from its sheath, and answering nothing, he pressed forward, and strode into the House, followed by a ringing cheer from the lobby. It was a forced march, a dauntless charge, and a plucky dash for rescue. But it availed nothing. Kenealy was counted out, and not caring to face the jovial throng in the lobby, gathered up his papers, and slunk away behind the Speaker's

chair, leaving the air purer, and giving the Major an opportunity of instantly serving out refreshment to the rescue party.

June 18. — Sir Charles Adderley and the Merchant Shipping Bill. “Sir Charles Adderley is a dull man,” Bright once said, and words were rarely better mated. Sir Charles would have made an admirable country gentleman with an intelligent steward to manage his farms and sell his hay. He is kind of heart, upright in character, excellent in intention, and assiduous in business. But he is always a day behind the world. He is the sort of man who, if a joke were made contemporaneously with the entrance of the soup, would, having in the meanwhile brooded over it, startle the company by a burst of laughter as the fish was being removed. If the world would only stand still for twenty-four hours, and so give him an opportunity of starting fair with it, he might get along pretty well, at least for a week or two. But as the solar system at present works Sir Charles plods heavily behind, just intelligent enough to be troubled with the consciousness that there is something going on that he cannot quite comprehend, yet not able to grasp it fully. It is pitiable to see him sitting on the Treasury bench to-night. It is nearly midnight, and after struggling for five hours with the shipowners, he has retired from the fight, and is sitting there with downcast head, pulling at his moustache and biting his forefinger. Even the Major, greatly as he has dined, has seen, as through a mist, how feebly and helplessly the President of the Board of Trade flounders in the meshes of his own Bill.

“Mos’ 'xtor’nary!” the Major thundered forth just now — “mos’ 'xtor’nary, sir! Right hon’able genelman quite incapable expressin’ self!” They hung on to the Major’s coat-tails; they prodded him in the side as if he were a prize bullock on show; they whispered in his ear; they cried “Order!” in an angry tone not often used towards the general favourite; and they invoked the authority of the Chairman, by which combination of influence he was at length induced to forsake the war-path on to which he had suddenly and fiercely leaped. But it was felt that he had stumbled on the truth, that the President of the Board of Trade had quite lost his head, and was for the moment mentally as helpless as Joe Willett when he sat bound in a chair amid the ruins of the Maypole bar.

This collapse of the Merchant Shipping Act Amendment Bill makes Sir Charles's case hopeless. Not much is expected from a dull man, and if these difficulties had come upon him suddenly and without notice his utter failure might have been overlooked. But for many weeks past he has been doggedly labouring at this Bill. He has been in daily consultation with the shipowners, and even embarked on a tour of inspection through the principal seaports, seeing the ships and the water for himself. It may be that he has attempted too much, and that, like a weak youth who has "crammed" for his examination, his mind has given way under the strain just when his special knowledge came to be tested. However it be, there is no question that Sir Charles Adderley is at this moment in a state of coma, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has no more to do with the Merchant Shipping Acts than has the Postmaster-General, has taken the direction of the debate out of his hands, and is trying to make the best of the hopeless muddle into which it has slidden.

June 19. — Total collapse. Worse and worse. At the morning sitting to-day poor Sir Charles Adderley came down refreshed by a night's sleep, and cheery with the conviction that he had at last seen his way through the difficulty about those pestering advance-notes. Several shipowners had placed amendments upon the paper. Finally it was resolved to accept the amendment standing in the name of Bates, not because it was better than others, but because Bates is a supporter of the Government who showed a dangerous amount of restiveness last night, and whom it might be well to mollify. Accordingly Sir Charles, full of this great scheme of pacification, having carefully scanned the amendment through his eyeglass and gathered some notion of what it meant, submitted it to the Committee.

Alas! the Committee would have nothing to do with it. Once more the storm of obloquy rattled around the head of the hapless President of the Board of Trade, and the cry for the withdrawal of the clause rising from the Opposition benches was echoed on the Ministerial side. To give way further appeared too much even for the present Government, and Northcote, coming to the aid of his colleague, who had dropped his eyeglass

and hopelessly collapsed, declared that the clause must in its amended form stand part of the Bill.

The decks were being cleared for action, amid the jubilation of the Liberals and the grim silence of the Ministerialists, at least a score of whom were committed to opposition. It was quite possible that the Government would be defeated, and absolutely certain that their majority would be dangerously small. Whilst the talk was carried forward, Hart Dyke went up to the Treasury bench and held a whispered consultation with his chief, who had entered the House just before the Chancellor of the Exchequer interposed. What the Whip said will remain a secret, but its effect was seen when, a few minutes later, the Premier, rising and pulling himself together with a shrug of the shoulders, made one of the most audacious speeches I ever heard, even from him. He threw over Adderley and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and gave up the clause over which there had been all the fighting of last night and to-day, at the same time endeavouring to impress his audience with the conviction that if such a step were a matter of satisfaction to them, to him it was the realisation of a wish he had secretly cherished ever since he had seen the Bill in print.

So the division was averted, and once more Sir Charles brought out his eyeglass and anxiously wandered over the bulky volume of the amendments to see what those terrible ship-owners were up to next. He found out soon enough, and in spite of concessions made with both hands, when at seven o'clock the sitting was suspended, collapse had set in again with increased severity.

June 24. — Disraeli's decline. Disraeli has never been the same man since that fatal frenzied moment when, stirred by his old hatred for Lowe, he suddenly seized the clumsy and inadequate weapon Lewis extended to him in the matter of the proceedings against the printers of the *Times* and *Daily News*, and dealt a wild blow at the meek white head on the other side of the table. Up to that very night business was progressing in Parliament with a happy ease and regularity that presaged a fruitful session. Since that very night everything has gone wrong, and Disraeli, of whom erewhile it was truly said that he touched no difficulty

without smoothing it away, now touches no question, however simple, without turning it into a difficulty.

The difference in the aspect of the House last session is the more marked by reason of the sudden contrast. Disraeli then held not only the majority but the minority in hand. This skilful ready management was not less conspicuous in the early part of this session. He did much as he would with the House, getting it to work as long as he pleased, to leave things undone if he thought it advisable, to smile when he was gay, and to shudder at a shadow when he was solemn. Then came the blind Fury against innocuous Lowe, and with abhorred shears it slit the thin-spun thread by which the Premier held in leash the many-minded assembly. Never since that night has Disraeli been himself again as manager of the House of Commons. He has, in truth, gone from bad to worse, floundering in the mud of his own act, and when he might have risen he has been held down by the frantic struggling of Adderley and the rest.

To-night he was in a condition almost unrecognisable. A week or two ago he announced with some pomp that he would himself introduce the Agricultural Holdings Bill, and as he is not given to making speeches unnecessarily, expectation was naturally highly wrought. But, unhappily, before he might commence his speech to-night he had to go through the humiliating ordeal of confessing that he had blundered, and was fain formally to withdraw a resolution affecting the management of the House, which it is only fair to suppose had not been placed on the paper without due consideration and an absolute certainty of its acceptance. Perhaps this upset him, and spoiled the great speech that was to be. Certainly the attempt was a lamentable failure, and the House observed with sorrow the feeble grasp, the wandering vision, the uncertain utterance, the infelicitous illustration, and the irrelevant argument of its former master. Disraeli felt it too, as, broken in spirit and wearied in body, he sat down amid the cheerless silence of the inattentive House.

July 4.—Lawyers
in Parliament.

How is it that the available talent whence a Prime Minister may select the Law Officers of the Crown is, as proved by the result, so exceedingly poor and unsatisfactory? The number of lawyers in the House of

Commons is larger compared with that of any other special profession represented, whilst the official prizes held out to clever men are of the highest and most substantial character. The course of promotion, too, is regular and rapid. A man may hang about an under-Secretaryship of State for years and look no higher than finally to be Secretary, a promotion to which he has no prescriptive right, and may only hope to earn. With the barrister who, being in the House of Commons, steadily fixes his eyes on the Solicitor-Generalship, the case is different. Once made Solicitor-General, whilst the immediate professional advantages are soothingly solid, the Lord Chancellorship is a plum which no one can say hangs above his reach. Take the case of Coleridge. Ten years ago the height of his professional distinction was limited by the Recordership of Falmouth. In 1865 Exeter gave him a seat in Parliament. In the last month of 1868, little more than six years ago, he was made Solicitor-General, and for nearly two years has been Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. And yet no one, except perhaps the Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, would say that Coleridge is a man of extraordinary parliamentary ability, or that his success as a Minister of the Crown was even an average one. He was, to tell the truth, a most mal-adroit man in office, and did a good deal, in a way that will be recognised when the history of the Administration comes to be written, to hasten the discomfiture of Gladstone's Government.

What happened as an immediate consequence of Coleridge's being provided for on the bench illustrates still more forcibly the breathless speed with which fortune carries onward a barrister who once gets his foot in the stirrup. Henry James is a mature young man of a certain degree of fluency and smartness, who, more successful than that other mature young man Huddleston, found a seat at the general election of 1868. Up to that period he was absolutely unknown out of the Oxford Circuit, where he was recognised as a rising youth whose genius had been fitly, not to say lavishly, rewarded by promotion to the office of Postman in the Court of Exchequer. The first fruit of his political success at Taunton was gathered when, in the very year he took his seat in Gladstone's Parliament, he was made a Q.C. James of course selected a seat below the gangway, whence he occasionally delivered fairly pointed speeches

of no particular breadth or depth. Once he made a great hit by bearding Gladstone and causing him to lose his temper. After that his promotion was rapid, and the same year that saw him nominated Solicitor-General hailed him Attorney-General. At the rate of progress obtained he might have been made a judge before Parliament met; but happily Gladstone resigned, and James enjoys the strange distinction of having gone into the recess in August with one Parliament a private member, and reappearing in March, with another, an ex-Attorney-General who had been promoted in due course from the Solicitor-Generalship.

On the other side of the House it is no better. Baggallay is Attorney-General by right of promotion, and no one likes to say anything unkind of so amiable, modest, conscientious, and hard-working a man. But did he show to-night, for example, when in charge of the Judicature Act Amendment Bill, any of those qualities which one looks for in the titular head of such a splendid body as the English Bar? Is this bald speech, this easily swayed opinion, this feeble grasp, this mildly belated air, becoming in the leader of men who are marked by the possession of the keenest and the most highly trained faculties?

As for Holker, that mystery of mysteries, that faintly smiling, as through a horse-collar, rustic, he has not yet got over the feeling of astonishment amounting to stupefaction at finding himself Solicitor-General and "Sir John." His appointment is perhaps one of the most inscrutable ever made to an office which has had its glory dimmed by much dulness. He is worse even than the Lord-Advocate, because physically there is more of him. Few people notice the tall, high-shouldered man, with whiskers of inoffensive hue, who softly walks in and out of the House like a patriarchal and prosperous rabbit who has come to terms with the ferrets, and regularly pays his blackmail. Gordon rarely does anything in his Ministerial capacity save draw his salary, and see that the title of the Sheriff's Court (Scotland) (No. 2) Bill is correctly printed, and duly appears on the orders on successive Government nights. But he is so quiet and mouse-like that, as we should in any case have to include the salary of the Lord-Advocate in the estimates, no one grudges him his little sinecure. Moreover, in his case Disraeli really had no choice. Strange as it may appear, a

country in which Mr. Saddletree was a natural growth has sent to the Ministerial side of the House of Commons no other practising barristers except Gordon and Montgomerie. With Holker all the circumstances are different. There are several able lawyers in the rank-and-file of the Conservative party, whose elder and superior claims were set aside for his.

Talking about him the other night L. said, "As I see his heavy countenance and hulking form set in a prominent place on the Treasury bench, the constantly returning thought is that which occurred to George III. in view of the apple in the dumpling, and I wonder how the Dizzy he got there."

July 7.—A County member. To-night, whilst the House was in Committee on the Judicature Bill, Ormsby-Gore entered at his usual hour of ten o'clock, dinner being so far digested that a gentle walk across the lobby and down the floor of the House would not be harmful. There was not present a single layman except himself. When he reached his seat behind the Treasury bench, he put up his eyeglass and slowly surveyed the scene with the intelligent expression peculiar to him. Then barricading himself behind his ample shirt-front, which rose above his chin, he resolved himself to sleep, perchance to dream. But it was only a light doze, such as sometimes overtakes the butterfly in the bosom of the rose, and ever and anon he awoke, and over the barricade, which was gradually rising to the level of his eyes, curiously regarded the Committee.

Happy North Shropshire! For fifteen years Mr. Ormsby-Gore has come down for you to questions; for fifteen years he has, punctually at the hour of seven, gone out to dress for dinner for you; for fifteen years he has carefully dined for you; for fifteen years he has, for you, come back regularly at ten o'clock; for fifteen years he has voted for you exactly as the "party" voted; for fifteen years he has, from half-past ten till midnight or later, slept for you the sleep of the well-dined man, secure in the protection of the barricade; for fifteen years his carriage has rolled up for you and for him, and taken him off to his bed, where he has dreamed that the agricultural labourer has got into Gladstone's clothes, and has whisked away from under his very nose a liver wing he was just about to stick his fork into, the plates being laid out (in that odd way in which affairs range

themselves in dreams) on the table of the House of Commons. Once it was rumoured that Disraeli was about to make this self-denying senator a peer. But it came to nothing, and here he is to-night dozing and snorting, and staring around at the Committee.

July 13.—Parliamentary jesters. It is a striking and a saddening evidence of the sheep-like character which the House of Commons shares with all assemblies of mankind, that when Bernal Osborne was a member it invariably laughed when he opened his mouth. In times past Osborne had earned the character of being "funny;" and so, just as the rear ranks of a flock of sheep will jump at a place where a bar stopped the way of the leaders, albeit the obstruction has been removed since they passed on, so the House laughed consumedly when the member for Waterford made a few commonplace and often impertinent observations. Those who had gone before had been wont to laugh on these occasions, and so laughed we. When Waterford displaced Bernal Osborne in favour of that genuine though unconscious humorist Major O'Gorman, the House of Commons felt as forlorn as if the clock had stopped, or as if the Speaker's chair had been set up where the Serjeant-at-Arms now has his modest box. It is wonderful what an assistance some people derive from knowledge of when, with whom, and at whom they are to laugh. It saves an immense amount of trouble, and gives a temporary unity of feeling to a divided assembly, which is cheery and sociable.

With the banishment of Bernal Osborne the laughter-stop was gone from that great organ the House of Commons, and members, deprived of the guiding hand of custom, feebly and timidly laughed at promiscuous jokes, and often laughed in the wrong place. Sir Wilfrid Lawson's claim for the vacant cap and the ownerless bells was eagerly welcomed and gratefully conceded; and after cracking unheeded jokes for many sessions, he suddenly found himself promoted to the proud position of chief jester to the House of Commons. The change was one upon which the House is to be congratulated; for whereas Bernal Osborne was merely flippant, and earned a laugh because, being devoid of certain sensibilities, he was able to indulge in rude personalities from which a gentleman would shrink, Wilfrid

Lawson is really humorous and often witty. He is gifted with a large fund of common sense, notwithstanding his prevailing craze, and has flashing through his mind those bright lights which reveal hidden points of resemblance between apparent incongruities, the sudden making clear of which mainly constitutes what we call humour. He not only thinks of good things to say, but says them well.

Nothing is more obvious than that his *bon-mots* are carefully prepared at home, and brought down to the House on a slip of paper. This is a weakness he wisely makes no attempt to hide. There is the slip of paper held in his hand. Members can see him glancing at it, and by certain mannerisms of the voice have learnt to anticipate by some seconds the precise stage in his speech at which a joke is to be taken off the list and used. But notwithstanding this habit, which falls short of the highest style of humorous speech, Lawson is most successful in the delivery of his preserved jokes. He does not hurry over their utterance as if he were afraid they would miss fire, as Lowe does; nor does he in enunciating them hug them with grand-maternal affection, as Scourfield fondles those rickety witticisms with which he from time to time afflicts the House. He makes his points well and coolly, in the easy conversational style best suited to their genus.

In this respect a wide difference is presented by the manner of Leatham. He is one of the most determined and cold-blooded manufacturers of epigrams. Some of his produce is exceedingly good; witness that definition of the character of the legislation of Disraeli's Ministry during the past session—"not law-giving, but leave-taking."* Nothing could be neater than that, and if Bright had been the speaker all the newspapers would have rung the changes upon the phrase, and it would have served as a watchword at Liberal ward meetings up to next Christmas. But Leatham spoils his own wit in giving it utterance. There is a fatal air of deliberate preparation over his lightest jokes that damps human appreciation. He brings his smart things on to the platform in a bundle all ready made up and labelled, and hands them over to the audience as if they were packets of tea or half-pounds of sugar.

* A reference to the almost unvaried permissive character of the legislation promoted by the Government.

Discussing in the *Spectator* Locke's definition of wit, Addison says, "Every resemblance in the ideas is not that which we call wit unless it be such an one that gives Delight and Surprise to the reader." Surprise, in the sense here meant, is obviously an essential element in the creation of wit. But it is not less obvious that the principle should be carried out farther and in another direction, and that the manifestation of the flash of wit or humour should be as unexpected as the establishment of an artificial congruity of the apparently incongruous, which is wit itself. No one likes to take his wit in a succession of prearranged courses, as if it were a dinner or a Turkish bath. Is there anything more dreary than a volume of "jests," even though it embalm fragments of the choicest wit of the age? Can any one read the "Book of Snobs" all through at a sitting without a feeling of nausea or at least of weariness? An evident set purpose is the pall of wit, and Leatham's sharp sayings, good as they may be when born in his study, are all stiff corpses when the time comes that they should gaily dance about the ears of the public.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. PLIMSOLL.

"A Working-man's Member"—A fiery Celt—Plimsoll's Defiance—Reconciliation—Forster and the Leadership—At the Scæan Gate.

July 15. — "A working-man's member." Macdonald, the member for Stafford, who got in at the general election as "the working-man's member," has of late been under a cloud with his old friends and supporters. It has been said that he is somewhat susceptible to the subtle influence of companionship, however remote, with "noble lords." Apparently the best way to meet such an aspersion would be to trot out the working man, and shove him up against the Prince of Wales. Accordingly, when, last Thursday, Disraeli gave notice of his intention to move to-day for a vote to meet some of the expenses of the Prince of Wales's visit to India, Macdonald rose, and in an impressive

manner stated that he should "feel it his dooty," in the name of the working man, to oppose the vote. So here he is to-night, standing far out on the floor of the House, as is his modest wont, oscillating from side to side as if he were training for the office of pendulum, and rubbing himself about the waist with his right hand the while he emphasises his nothingnesses upon the attention of the openly contemptuous House by the shaking of the left forefinger.

G. explains this curious, restless motion of the right hand over his waist, into the bosom of his frock-coat, and back again to the waist, by the suggestion that Macdonald is feeling for the *k's* he drops as he goes along. But a more rational explanation is that the man is ill at ease in the company in which he finds himself, and really does not know what to do with his hands, which, under such circumstances, are always a prime difficulty.

The result is irritating, but not nearly so much so as that other habit of slowly and emphatically uttering nothing, which Macdonald has brought to provoking perfection. "Let me," he said just now, "remind hon. gentlemen of what 'as occurred within the past week" (pause, whilst he takes a fresh swing, puts his hand in the bosom of his coat, and shows a consciousness of the gathering of heavy frowns on his brow). "Last night there was a meetin' in a large town in the North"—(another pause, a fresh swing, and the hand is slowly withdrawn from the bosom of the coat, and bestowed upon the roomy waist). "It was a large meetin'." (Pause.) "It took place at Leeds." (Pause: and the hand slowly seeks the shelter of the bosom, as seagulls hide themselves in the valleys from the coming storm. The House is quiet now, and listening. The expression of intensity deepens on the face of the orator. Captain Gosset clutches his sword. Ormsby-Gore buries his chin behind the barricade.) "*An alderman was in the chair!*"

That is all we hear for some time, for the House, highly tickled by this absurd anti-climax, designed to produce quite other effect, breaks forth in a peal of laughter, which resounds again and again, and makes an end of Macdonald for the present. But he is irrepressible, and shortly after he has resumed his seat his irritating "'Ear, 'ear, 'ear, 'ear!" rattles through the House; for even when he has had his turn, and others speak, he

must needs remind the world of his continued existence by inconsequential cackling.

Locke, who is not so frequently in the House as he used to be, and is not familiar with this new feature of Parliamentary debate, was taken aback when the "'Ear, 'ear, 'ear!" suddenly broke out behind him to-night, and displayed a disposition to argue the matter.

"The hon. member says 'Hear, hear!' when I show he is altogether in the wrong. What does he mean?"

But this indignant remark was only a fresh proof of the simplicity of Locke's mind. Macdonald's "'Ear, 'ear, 'ear!" has no more to do with arguments advanced in debate than the interjections of a parrot have with the course of the conversation they interrupt. He had been sitting unnoticed for some minutes, and thought it was about time the House of Commons should be reminded of his presence. It was an accident—unfortunate, perhaps, but not criminal—that the cackling should have fallen due at that precise moment. But Locke need not have made such a fuss about it.

July 16.—*A fiery Celt.* At one o'clock this morning, just after the third division in Committee on the expenses of the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, and whilst the bar was blocked by the slowly departing throng of members who had waited to hear the figures announced, Captain Nolan, dashing through the half-opened door leading from the lobby, charged straight at the crowd, which he parted right and left, as if he were a projectile from one of his own improved guns. Rushing up to his seat below the gangway, he turned his flushed face and flashing eyes towards the Chairman, and claimed to be heard on a question of privilege. At that moment the Committee had been cleared for a division. The glass was turned, and till the sand ran out the Chairman might not speak when thus addressed. So Raikes sat still whilst all the Committee roared at Nolan, instructing him and entreating him to sit down. But they might as well have shouted to Niagara to stop its flow. The blood of the Nolans—a hot fluid in the coolest state of the thermometer—was at boiling heat, and with body erect, head thrown back, eyes blazing, and hands clenched, the gallant Captain stood and glared upon the tumultuous Committee, and so stood till the interval was

passed, the sand had run out, and the tongue of the Chairman was loosened.

Presently the explanation of this stormy irruption was forthcoming. Nolan had placed upon the paper an amendment to the vote of £100, the estimated expense incurred in the matter of proceedings taken against magistrates and the constabulary in Ireland for acts done by them in the execution of their duty. Not being in his place when the vote was in due course proposed, he had lost his opportunity of stating his objections—not finally, for he could do so with precisely equal effect when the report of the Committee was brought up. His absence was an accident for which certainly neither the Chairman nor the Committee was to blame, and with an ordinary member and on an English Bill would never have been heard of out of family circles. But looking through those distorting spectacles which he hastens to put on, Nolan beheld the Government deliberately drawing up a deep design to prevent his doing justice to Ireland by moving this particular and important amendment; saw the Chairman of Committees, bribed by the promise of increased salary, give his consent to become an accomplice in the fell design; and watched with rage and scorn as many as fifty or sixty otherwise upright English gentlemen agree to do their part in the plot by blocking up the bar at the very moment when he would have entered the House!

July 22. — Plim-
soll's defiance.

When, at a quarter past four, public business commenced, the House presented its usual aspect, save that it was perhaps exceptionally crowded, in anticipation of a statement on the course of public business which the Premier was prepared to make. The last question on the printed list was one by Charley, and was concerned with the fate of the Infanticide Bill. Disraeli rising to answer this query, proceeded to say that when the other day Hartington had asked him to make a general statement as to the fate of Bills on the orders, he had felt a difficulty in replying, it having been put without notice. He had also been influenced by extreme anxiety to get the Merchant Shipping Bill passed this session. If the Agricultural Holdings Bill were, as he had hoped, to pass through Committee this week, they should have been able to deal with the Merchant Shipping Bill. But that was not now likely, and

he saw with unfeigned and unaffected regret the impossibility of passing the Bill this session. He could promise the House that if next session he occupied the position he now held, he would take the earliest opportunity of dealing with the Bill.

Goschen having briefly expressed his deep feeling of regret that the Merchant Shipping Bill should have been sacrificed for the sake of the Agricultural Holdings Bill, Eustace Smith was proceeding to make some remarks to the same effect, when the Speaker reminded him that an opportunity would be afforded for discussing the matter when the motion was made for the discharge of the order. Smith promptly sat down, and Plimsoll, rising from the cross bench before the chair of the Serjeant-at-Arms, cried out in a loud voice—

“I beg to move the adjournment of the House.”

The position occupied was one from which it is not usual to address the House, and being reminded of this by members near, he accepted a seat further within the limits of the House, vacated in his favour by Lord Francis Conyngham. Plimsoll, who was evidently labouring under profound emotion, went on to protest against the abandonment of the Merchant Shipping Bill, entreating the Premier “not to consign some thousands of men to death.” There were, he said, shipowners of burglarious tendencies outside, who were well represented inside the House, and who had defeated the measure by crushing it under the weight of obstructive amendments.

Hereupon cries of “Name, name!” came from the Conservative benches, to which Plimsoll, whose excitement was momentarily increasing, answered—

“Oh, I’ll give names.”

Standing out on the floor, and raising his arms aloft, he went on to say that the Secretary at Lloyd’s had told him that for thirty years he had not known of a ship being broken up on account of being worn out. Ships passed from hand to hand till they reached some needy shipowner, who sent them out to sea with a freight of precious human life. “Ship-knackers” these men were called, and Plimsoll declared that he had heard a Secretary to the Treasury say that a member of the House was “nothing more than a ship-knacker.”

Amid loud cries of “Order,” the Speaker rose and pointed out to Plimsoll, as he had done to Smith, that the proper time to

discuss the Merchant Shipping Bill was when the discharge of the order for its committal was moved.

"Very well," said Mr. Plimsoll, "then I give notice that I will on Tuesday ask the right hon. gentleman the President of the Board of Trade whether certain ships (a list of which he read), which were lost at sea, were owned by Edward Bates, and whether that gentleman is Edward Bates, a member of this House."

At this point the excitement of the House was scarcely less intense than that of Plimsoll himself. Exclamations burst forth from every side, amid which Plimsoll, rushing towards the middle of the floor till he faced the Speaker's chair, stamped his foot and cried out at the top of his voice—

"I am determined to unmask the villains who sent these men to their graves."

The Speaker rose, and the shout of "Order, order!" became a continuous roar; but Plimsoll stood in the middle of the floor gesticulating and repeating that he would unmask the villains. With some difficulty he was induced to resume his seat, when the grave voice of the Speaker was heard expressing the "hope that the hon. member for Derby had not applied the word villain to any member of the House."

"I did, Sir," Plimsoll shouted, again leaping into the centre of the floor, "and I do not mean to withdraw it."

The Speaker still standing, and it being an elementary point of the etiquette of the House that two members shall not at the same moment be standing up to speak, several members endeavoured to bring Plimsoll back to the bench. But he, violently waving them off with his hand, stood his ground, and the Speaker proceeded to observe that "the observation of the hon. member was not altogether Parliamentary."

"I must decline to withdraw it," Plimsoll said with emphasis, at the same time drawing out a large sheet of white paper, and advancing towards the table.

The Speaker, whose calm manner and deliberate accents formed a strange contrast to the excited demeanour of Plimsoll, added that as the hon. member declined to withdraw the expression, he must leave his conduct to the judgment of the House.

"And I shall be very glad to submit to it," rejoined Plimsoll

from his 'vantage-ground on the middle of the floor, "and there," he added, rushing up to the table and laying the piece of white paper beside the Mace, "is my protest against the conduct of the Government."

Even after this Plimsoll showed no disposition to retire to his seat, but still stood on the floor, whilst indescribable confusion reigned on the benches on each side. Disraeli showing a disposition to rise, Plimsoll, violently shaking his fist at him, said some words the purport of which could not be gathered above the din of voices.

For a few moments the Premier stood at the table waiting to speak, whilst Plimsoll stood almost within arm's length of him, gesticulating now in the direction of Adderley, who occupied a safe position at the remote end of the Treasury Bench. With great difficulty Plimsoll was got back to his seat, and, the noise partially subsiding, Disraeli called upon the Speaker to "exercise one of his highest duties and reprimand the hon. member for Derby." Concluding by formally moving that he be reprimanded, Disraeli sat down, and the Speaker rising again, said it was according to the practice of the House that the member thus signalised should be heard in his place and should then withdraw.

Plimsoll made no attempt to "speak in his place," but promptly rising and excitedly talking as he went, he walked rapidly towards the door. Charles Lewis, standing at the Bar, amid a throng of members watching the scene, made some remark as he passed. Turning upon him with a sudden fierceness that made him precipitately draw back several paces, Plimsoll loudly exclaimed—

"Good God! don't you know that thousands of men are sent out to drown?"

When the doors had closed on Plimsoll, the Speaker formally put the question that he be reprimanded. Hartington, whilst supporting the motion, suggested that it would be to the dignity and advantage of the House if action might be deferred to give time to Plimsoll to cool down. A. M. Sullivan, who had followed Plimsoll out, and who now returned pale and breathless, pleaded in terms which the House accepted by loud cheering, that consideration and indulgence might be extended to the hon. member. He was, Sullivan testified, in a condition of extreme

excitement, the result of overstrained anxiety and excess of work. If further action might be deferred for a week, Plimsoll would be the first to regret what he had done, in so far as he had sinned against the decorum of the House.

Disraeli at once accepted this explanation, and moved, in place of his former resolution, that Plimsoll be requested to attend in his place on that day week. After some words from Fawcett and Bass, the motion was agreed to, and the House, subsiding suddenly from a state of intense excitement, was the next moment calmly considering in Committee the clauses of the Agricultural Holdings Bill.

July 29.—Reconciliation.

Plimsoll entered shortly after four o'clock, and took his usual seat below the gangway, when he was warmly greeted by members near him. In due course a series of notices of motion with respect to the new Merchant Shipping Bill was given by Norwood, E. J. Reed, Mac-Iver, Monk, and Eustace Smith. When the questions had been disposed of, Lowe, who had for some minutes been standing at the bar with a paper in his hand, was called by the Speaker, and advanced to the table with the Report of the Select Committee on Foreign Loans. Plimsoll immediately after rose, and was cheered by some members below the gangway on the Opposition side; but the applause did not extend beyond these benches. When, however, he had read so far through his statement as to make known his intention to apologise to the Speaker of the House for his "transgression of Parliamentary usages," the cheering became general. It was renewed even more heartily when he added that he "apologised in no grudging or reluctant spirit, but frankly and sincerely." At the same time he intimated that he "did not withdraw any statement of fact."

Having concluded the reading of his apology, Plimsoll withdrew, and the Speaker called on the orders of the day, the first of which was for the adjourned debate on the motion that "Mr. Plimsoll, the member for Derby, for his disorderly conduct be reprimanded in his place by the Speaker." Disraeli rose and was received with loud cheers. Speaking in an unusually emphatic manner, he said that had he been aware of the circumstances stated by Sullivan on the last occasion this question was before the House, he should not have moved the resolution

now before them. He should have looked upon Plimsoll's conduct as the result of a condition of mind overstrained by his devotion to a cause of the greatest importance. Having become aware of these facts, he should have declined to press his motion, even if Plimsoll had not appeared in his place and apologised. But the member for Derby having been restored to that state of temper which becomes a member of that assembly, and having made a complete and satisfactory apology for what would under ordinary circumstances have been a great indiscretion, he should move that the order for the adjournment of the debate be discharged.

The Speaker was about to put the motion when Bentinck pointed out that Plimsoll had made grave charges against a member of the House, which he had declined to withdraw. Bentinck thought that for the sake of the honour of the House Plimsoll should be called upon either to retract those charges or to proceed further with them. This speech was heard in silence, and the Speaker had again put the question, when Newdegate rose, amid murmurs, and supported the view taken by Bentinck. No one offering to continue the discussion, the question was again put, and was unanimously agreed to amid loud cheering.

Aug. 1. — Forster
and the Leader-
ship.

It is the common explanation of the restless and disproportionate activity shown by Forster during the session now practically closed, that he is "bidding for the leadership of the Liberal party." That is the remark forthcoming whenever he makes a declaration on any subject, from the county franchise to the Colonies, and it is worth noting, if it were only as indicating the existence of a widely spread belief, that the uncouth Forster, like the primly dressed General Trochu, "has a plan." This frequent tuwhitting may have for grand motive-power the desire to keep Forster's name before the public, in the event of anything turning up—Hartington in the House of Lords for example. But it may be traced to the simpler action of natural garrulity and the craving for food for vanity, so easily supplied by the cheers of an audience and the simultaneous occupation of the leader-writers on the morning papers. Forster's chances of the leadership of the Liberal party were pushed with much vigour when, last February,

the office was officially declared to be vacant. They did not then succeed in landing him in the desired position, and they are not nearly so good now as they were nine months ago.

A weighty reason why it was thought that Forster would do for leader was that he was one of the two possible candidates, and it was believed that the other one would not do. That reason exists no longer, for Hartington, after the trial of a session and a recess, stands much higher in public opinion than he did when the barren honour of leadership was thrust upon him. He has maintained throughout the session a quiet, manly, and modest demeanour which won the respect and esteem of the House. He was always there when wanted, and he was never there when he had better have stayed away—a much more difficult lesson for statesmen to learn. As a speaker he has greatly improved in clearness of diction and ease in delivery, and as he gets a firmer grasp on the great truth that it is not necessary to make a long speech in order to express the views which an intelligent common-sense man holds on a given question, he will still further improve. His style will not carry him, or rather will not carry his audience, through a speech of longer duration than twenty minutes, and happily there are not, on the average, two occasions in a session when any man on either of the front benches need speak for more than twenty minutes in order to make clear his meaning and give due weight to what he has to say. What Hartington had to say on the current events of the session was always sensible, and was sometimes conspicuously wise.

It should not be forgotten that it was he who, by his presence of mind and ready resource, saved the House of Commons from a hopeless predicament into which no less a person than Disraeli was leading it on the memorable occasion of Plimsoll's dance of defiance. When the member for Derby had been safely piloted over the bar, and out into the cooler air of the lobby, Disraeli, utterly distraught by the excitement of the scene, hurriedly proposed that he should be brought back and reprimanded by the Speaker. The House, not knowing what to do, silently acquiesced, and in a few minutes Plimsoll would have been once more standing on one leg on the floor of the House, and, so ungovernable was his passion at that moment, might even have done something desperate with the Mace—perhaps made a clean sweep of the Treasury bench with it. Hartington, interposing, sug-

gested that it might be better to adjourn the debate for a week, by which time Plimsoll would have had an opportunity of cooling down, a shrewd and discreet evasion of the difficulty which Disraeli promptly adopted, with the happiest issues as the event proved.

Hartington sees farther and clearer than some of his contemporaries who are always going about with a telescope to their eye, and who, staring sapiently into the far horizon, occasionally tumble into a ditch. He never truckles even to his own supporters. He is not given to shuffling either with his legs or his convictions. He never stoops to a subterfuge, and scorns to embarrass the enemy by the clever little dodges permissible on front benches. He is not a genius, and will never dim by comparison the fame of Fox, nor overshadow the greatness of Pitt. In a game of parliamentary strategy Disraeli would probably get the better of him. But he is a sturdily honest English gentleman, whose name and personal character are a tower of strength to his party, and whose leadership is a pledge that its policy will be straightforward and intelligent, bold if need be, manly and true always.

As for Forster, it would be a rash thing to say that he will never be the leader of the Liberal party. In the land of the blind the one-eyed man is a king, and putting Bright, Lowe, and Harcourt on one side, as for various reasons ineligible, sheer necessity would drive the Opposition under Forster's wing, supposing Hartington were to retire to-morrow. But in calculating ordinary chances, it would be prudent to take into account the fact that, except in rare crises of political excitement, it is the House of Commons, not the country, that chooses the leaders of party. Forster has not succeeded in endearing himself to the House of Commons, and probably there is only a single person in the House who ardently desires to see him in the position of leader, and he sits upon the front Opposition bench. In the country principles are everything, and personality nothing at all. In the House of Commons personality is a great deal, and sometimes is held of weightier account than a shade more or less of principle. Did not that distinguished Conservative, Lord Palmerston, hold the Liberal party in bondage for six years? And have not the Conservative party even suffered education at the hands of that enlightened Radical, Disraeli?

Absurd as the statement may appear to the practical public outside the House, it is nevertheless true that if Forster would brush his hair, would refrain from buying ready-made clothing that *never* fits him, would not sprawl in his seat, would keep his knees quiet when he is speaking, and would abstain from unseasonable chuckling when he refers to "my honourable friend," or to "the noble lord opposite," his chances of having a right to sit in the seat out of which he, towards the end of last session, literally elbowed his unassuming leader, would be nearly doubled. Whilst, if he could only change his nature, and show himself a modest man of polished manner, who thought more of the audience he addressed and less of himself, his ultimate success would be assured. In the meantime it is certain the House of Commons will accept as leader the Forster with whom it is now too familiar only when it cannot help itself.

Aug. 2.—At the Disraeli will, if he lives to the 21st of December, be seventy years of age, even according to the moderate estimate of the number of his years which is always accepted in polite society, though Society politely whispers behind its hand that there has been a mistake in somebody's reckoning, and that the Premier is at least three years older than he thinks. Still seventy is not so old for a worker with his intellect that one need be uttering the sad farewell. At seventy Palmerston was yet a twelvemonth out of reach of the final prize of his political life; and for eleven years after he had celebrated the anniversary that awaits Disraeli he filled the office of Prime Minister, and led the House of Commons as it had never been led before, and has been led only for a brief intermittent period since. Brougham at seventy was gaily entering upon a new tract of scientific research; and there are few things more certain than that Johnny Russell, who was a contemporary of Cardinal Wolsey's, who revised and suggested many alterations in the proofs of *De Argumentis Scientiarum*, who was the real author of the *Letters of Junius*, who was a schoolfellow of Lord Byron, and who introduced the Reform Bill of 1832, is quite ready-to-day to form an Administration. M. Thiers, at seventy-eight, talking to some one the other day, observed that he was getting rather tired of political life, and must write a book.

"I am weary," he said; "the hour of retirement has struck.

I must think of my *Memoirs*. I commenced that work forty years ago, and as yet have only written a few notes. I wish at least to finish this before I die: it will be my last legacy to the French people."

Bryant, who is the same age as Thiers, is now engaged upon a history of the United States, and has got so much as the Introduction already in the hands of the printers. Cato began to learn Greek at eighty, and Plutarch was older than Disraeli when he commenced to take lessons in Latin. At sixty-eight Dryden proposed to himself to translate the "*Iliad*"; and about the same age Dr. Johnson, yearning after a knowledge of the subtle beauties of the Dutch tongue, applied himself to acquire that language. Chaucer did not begin the "*Canterbury Tales*" till he was fifty-four; and Longfellow, who is a mere chicken of sixty-eight, is turning out verse every day.

"At sixty-five," Gladstone wrote to "my dear Granville," in one of the early days of last year—"at sixty-five, and after forty-two-years of a laborious public life, I think myself entitled to retire on the present opportunity."

This apparent wail for rest is really another instance of the vitality of old age. When Gladstone proposed to himself and "dear Granville" that he should retire, he had simply pictured a joyaunce of work of another sort, and in his mind's eye saw himself seated in his study forging thunderbolts for the astonishing of the unsuspecting Pope. It is ten weeks short of two years since that letter was written, and we know how Gladstone's vow of repose has been kept. He has poured out pamphlet after pamphlet, and has shaken the very foundations of the Vatican. He has pleased Whalley, endeared himself to Newdegate, cut himself adrift from Ireland, and greatly bored a large number of people who really cared nothing about the Vatican Decrees, but were obliged to read the pamphlets and articles because they were written by Gladstone, and were talked about at dinner and in society. He has felled at least one tree, has sold all his china, and after the lapse of a few weeks at the opening of last session he was most regular in his attendance upon the House of Commons, where he delivered one or two telling speeches. But, on the whole, there is much probability about the surmise that never during the last forty years has Gladstone spent such a miserable time as that which has elapsed since the date of his

letter to Granville; and no one need be surprised if presently he make a clean breast of it, frankly confess that he cannot longer live the life of the past session, and beg that the yoke may once more be placed upon his neck. With characteristic impetuosity he made the mistake of retiring before he was ripe for rest, and anticipated the natural course of events by at least ten years.

All these ancient illustrations and modern instances appear to show that Disraeli is as yet in the noontide of his strength and in the heyday of his genius. But facts are rather against the deduction. Disraeli's personal failure during the present session is one of its most familiar and striking phenomena; and there was something about the manifestation which suggests that it was not a passing weakness, but an irrevocable lapse. It was as sudden and complete as if a well-used bow, bent just beyond its strength, had cracked, and though, being of toughest wood and finest temper, it could still shoot arrows in the sportive game, it might never more play its accustomed part in the emergency of battle. Disraeli did not, in that way familiar to all hard-working men, gradually sink, as if he were weary, and would, if he might have a brief rest, come back brisk and ready as before. He suddenly and astonishingly broke down whilst in the full career of successful leadership. One day bright, clear, high-spirited, and full of resource, on the next he was hazy, blundering, weak, and certain only in the sense that having before him two ways he would not fail to take the wrong one.

This is a spectacle painful to all who, utterly apart from political predilection, feel a strong personal interest in Disraeli, and are as proud of his many brilliant successes as if he were of their own kin or college. It would be a sad sight for gods and men to behold one who, by indomitable pluck, tireless energy, and brilliant genius, has won his way from an apparently hopeless level to the premier rank of an English statesman, continue to hold his place on sufferance. That a past generation of the House of Commons roared with laughter at the pretensions of the youthful Disraeli is one of the proudest recollections in the Premier's career, as showing from what depths he has, single-handed, fought his way upwards. But that a new generation of the House of Commons should turn aside from him to hide the compassionate smile would be a pitiful ending.

Already we have in the House an instance of the melancholy

that attends a veteran who, murderous of his own fame, superfluous lags upon the stage on which he once was a brilliant star. What does Disraeli think when he sees rise from the corner seat below the opposite gangway the bowed form that once used to spring up to point the nervous finger at him, and hears the mumbling tones of the voice that erewhile rang out sharp sentences amid the plaudits of the crowded House, or above its not less gratifying murmurs? * It is passing sad when these ghosts of great men feebly walk the public ways, and destroy a reputation which no other hand could diminish. Who shall tell how much the fame of Brougham was marred by that last twenty years of his life? And how many times in the course of a twelve-month are the admirers of Lord John Russell, jealous of his fame, pained by the meddlesome perversity of the venerable man, who with an earl's title, has succeeded to the splendid heritage that was gathered by the sturdy Liberal chief in the half-century which followed on the year 1810? King Solomon is by common consent called "wise"; but due credit is not paid to his highest claim to the title—that when he had proffered him "what he would," he forbore to ask for long life. Swift, himself one of the most mournful instances of men who have lived too long for their reputation, recognised this truth, and created the Struldbrugs.

But Disraeli is, I trust, many years distant from the day when he shall finally retire from political life; nor is such a proposal suggested. It is Priam sitting at the Scaean gate, watching the fight in the plain below, that is recalled to the mind when one thinks of Disraeli's abdication.

"There sat the seniors of the Trojan race
(Old Priam's chiefs, and most in Priam's grace).
The king the first, Thymoetes at his side;
Lampus and Clytius, long in council tried;
Panthus and Hicetæon, once the strong,
And next the wisest of the reverend throng;
Antenor grave, and sage Ucalegon,
Lean'd on the walls and bask'd before the sun:
Chiefs who no more in bloody fights engage,
But wise through time and narrative with age,
In summer days like grasshoppers rejoice."

Disraeli, sitting in the corner seat behind the Treasury bench, would be a more honoured and a more powerful personage in the

* John Arthur Roebuck.

House of Commons even than Priam was in Troy. He would not have, as he would not need, the full company of the seniors. But if he pleased, Henley might figure as the sage Ucalegon; Lord Robert Montague, who has been sorely wounded by his nominal chief, might, on occasion, be equal to the part of Thymœtes; and Beresford-Hope, whose correspondence with the Ulysses who launched Six Resolutions against the Public Worship Regulation Bill is scarcely secret, would do credit to the fame of Antenor.

The position indicated has a nearer parallel in the life of Sir Robert Peel, and is indeed thereby robbed of its originality. But that would not prove an insuperable objection to Disraeli, who has never shown a too stubborn dislike to adopting the example, and sometimes even the words, of other people, and, with a slight re-colouring or a trifling alteration of form, presenting them as his own. As compared with the retirement from office of Peel, Disraeli would now have advantages which may, and very probably will, be out of his possession if the act be delayed over another year. Peel retired under the shadow of a crushing defeat, and his abdication of party leadership was simultaneous with the ousting of his party from office. Disraeli is at the present moment the head of a party which, albeit its feet are of clay, towers aloft with the "excellent brightness" and the "terrible form" of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream. Around the Ministry the prospect is calm and prosperous and peaceful, as was the state of Europe when, a few weeks before the war broke out between France and Germany, Mr. Hammond surveyed it from the window of the Foreign Office, and reported to his chief, Earl Granville. To resign the command at such a time would be an act absolutely free from all comment, save of admiration for a man who, after long labour and unsurpassed success, sought some measure of the rest he had earned so well.

Actually, Disraeli on the corner seat behind the Treasury bench would not be one whit less influential than Disraeli the Premier dozing in the seat assigned to the holder of his office. He would be the most prominent man in the House of Commons; the speaker for whose cheerful and witty sentences the assembly would wait; the statesman for whose advice parties on both sides would look; and the experienced counsellor, above suspicion of bias, whose word might settle half the little difficulties which now

occasionally disturb the serenity and waste the time of the House. There is no man who could play such a *rôle* with the grace, the skill, and the *bonhomie* of Disraeli ; and not its least winning recommendation is that its prompt acceptance by him might spare for many years to come one whom England would not willingly let die.

SESSION 1876.

CHAPTER IX.

THE QUEEN OPENS PARLIAMENT.

A stately Scene in the Lords—Sir Stafford Northcote's Oratory—Grant-Duff—Sir Stafford Northcote and Lord Hampton—Mr. Lowe's Lack.

A stately scene in the Lords. The scene in the House of Lords to-day was not indebted for any portion of its splendour to the glory of sunlight falling through the richly stained windows of the chamber. It was, in truth, as murky a day as might be, and before the company began to assemble the House looked all the drearier by reason of the alterations made in it to meet the necessities of the great occasion. The rows of cushioned seats had all been deprived of their backs, and so placed on an equality with the woolsack, whilst narrow benches, covered with dull crimson cloth of a shade distinctly different from that of the permanent seats, were set about in different portions of the chamber. Thus the cross benches in front of the bar, where the Prince of Wales is accustomed to sit and whence the Duke of Cambridge is used to speak, were placed longitudinally, and the space thus gained was filled in with the narrow strips of raised plank referred to. The confusion of colour was not pleasing to the eye, and it received a final touch of discordance when the peers assembled, dressed in robes of yet another shade of the all-pervading crimson.

Compensation was to be found by glancing to the right of the throne, where, in close clusters, sat some hundreds of ladies in full evening dress, wherein all the softer colours of the rainbow were represented and sweetly blended. Happily, the ladies preponderated in point of number, and reduced as nearly as possible to the minimum the inartistic effects of the oddly made cloaks of the peers, which seemed all misfits. The whole of the floor of the House, save the front row of benches and

the seats improvised in the centre of the chamber between the bar and the woolsack, was occupied by ladies, whilst a bright garland ran round the full length of the gallery to the right, continued in the opposite gallery for two-thirds of its extent, and met in a tangled skein of colour in the Strangers' Gallery. Where the garland stopped, in the gallery to the left of the throne, the Lord Mayor sat, and, dressed in his richest robes, toned off the colour till it was lost in the quiet uniform of an attaché of the German Embassy, who leaned over the railings at the extreme end. Baron de Grancy, military attaché of the French Embassy, sat on the right hand of the Lord Mayor, and near him Sir John Glover, his breast glittering with medals won in many a dashing enterprise.

According to the arrangements made by the Lord Chamberlain, the peeresses had had placed at their disposal the whole of the benches on the floor of the House (save the first) to the left of the throne; the daughters of peeresses had the second line of seats in the rows to the right; behind them, in the left-hand gallery, and in the Strangers' Gallery, were the untitled ladies who had obtained tickets of admission; whilst the friends of the Diplomatic Corps occupied the long gallery to the right.

Amongst the earlier arrivals of the peers was the Duke of Richmond, scarcely recognisable in the gay uniform of a lord-lieutenant. Lord Aberdare, Lord Cardwell, and Lord Hampton came in fully robed in their scarlet cloaks, tippetted with ermine, and tied at throat and shoulder with broad bows of black ribbons. By one o'clock the ladies were nearly all seated, and the peers began to arrive in large numbers, taking up their places on the front benches, and amongst the closely packed rows of seats before the bar. Like the temporal peers, the Bishops had relinquished their usual seats, retaining only the front bench.

The seats at the back of this were railed off, and appropriated to the use of the Diplomatic Corps. Early arrivals of this distinguished body were the Spanish Minister and General Schenck, the representative of the United States, who wore the uniform of his rank in the American Army. Count Beust, the Austrian Ambassador, was the first representative of the great European Powers to present himself, and he took his seat at the

end of the front bench furthest from the throne. The tall figure of Count Münster was presently seen towering high above the Duke of Richmond, with whom, in passing, he stopped to chat. Count Schouvaloff took his seat next to Count Beust, then Count Münster placed himself; then the Marquis d'Harcourt; and late and last Musurus Pacha, glittering with gold lace, diamonds, and orders of merit, and capped with a plain crimson fez. Whilst the Queen yet tarried, the representatives of Austria, Germany, Russia, France, and Turkey chatted in friendliest fashion, and it might have occurred to Gathorne Hardy, who came in and stood for a moment looking on, that his official occupation was seriously threatened with extinction.

When the Bishops arrived, preceded by the Bishop of Lichfield, who had the bench all to himself for nearly half an hour, they disposed themselves partly on the solitary bench reserved for them, and principally on the broad-cushioned bench in front of the woolsack. That their lordships wore their lawn was occasionally made clear; but like the rest of the peers of Parliament, they had thrown over their ordinary dress the loose-fitting robe of crimson, in their case distinguished by a deep tippet of ermine falling half-way down the back. Then came the Judges, in wigs and gowns, and sat down *dos-à-dos* on the other broad-cushioned bench in front of the woolsack. It seemed hard work for all their learned lordships to arrange themselves in so small a space, but its elasticity was further demonstrated when five minutes later the Lord Chief Justice entered, and had to be accommodated. At twenty minutes to two the Lord Chancellor entered, preceded by the mace, and took his seat on the woolsack. Then it seemed as if, save for the Throne and the chair to the right of it, there was no empty place in all the Chamber.

Up to this time semi-darkness reigned in the House, and a thin mist partially obscured the long lines of colour that led up to the solitary empty space where the throne stood, with the State robes of the Sovereign spread open upon it. At a signal from the Lord Chancellor, a flood of light fell upon the scene from the gaseliers in the roof, lighting up the fair faces, the softly coloured dresses, and the boundless wealth of jewellery that glistened on arm and neck and breast and head, and

trembled like a sea of light with every movement of the wearers.

Whilst the buzz of conversation which the sudden transformation scene thus simply effected was at its height, the Duke of Teck entered unnoticed, and stood near the steps to the left of the throne. A few minutes later, with a swift rustling sound, the whole company rose to their feet, and silently welcomed the Duchess of Edinburgh and the Duchess of Teck, who entered, escorted by the Duke of Edinburgh and the Duke of Cambridge. The royal ladies were led to the woolsack, which the Lord Chancellor vacated, and were seated facing the throne. The Duchess of Edinburgh wore a dress of blue velvet trimmed with sable. Her head was adorned with a coronet of diamonds, and as she sat with her back to the general company, there might be caught a glimpse of a scarlet ribbon worn crossways over her breast and caught behind by a diamond clasp.

Both the Duke of Edinburgh and the Duke of Cambridge wore the unsightly peer's robe, but underneath were plainly visible on the one the uniform of a captain in the navy, and on the other that of a field-marshal of the army. The Royal Dukes sat at the end of the front Opposition bench closer to the throne.

At twenty minutes past two the head of the royal procession arrived, in the persons of the four gorgeously clad heralds, who, bowing low as they passed before the royal ladies seated on the woolsack, crossed and took up a position to the left of the throne. Then followed Norroy King of Arms, Clarenceux King of Arms, Garter King of Arms, the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, and the Earl Marshal, who, each stopping to bow to the two duchesses, crossed over, and, with other officials and Court dignitaries, stood in a dazzling group to the left of the throne.

Once more the company rose, as the Queen entered, the Marquis of Winchester and the Duke of Richmond preceding her, the one bearing the cap of maintenance and the other clasping with both hands the sword of state. As the Queen turned to the left to take her place on the throne, the Princess of Wales lightly stepped forward and sat down in the centre of the woolsack, her slight figure set with great advantage between those of the Duchess of Teck and the Duchess of Edinburgh.

The Queen was dressed in a robe of imperial purple, so dark that it might have passed for black. On her head, surmounting the white pointed cap familiar in many of her portraits, was a miniature crown of diamonds. Round her neck was a magnificent necklace of diamonds; a large diamond glistened like a star on her breast; and the jewel of the Order of the Garter shone on the broad blue band of ribbon worn across her shoulder. Conspicuous amongst so much splendour were the simple black fan her Majesty carried, and the black gloves which covered hands and wrists.

The Princess Beatrice and the Princess Louise, who followed close behind, accompanied her Majesty to the throne, and during the ceremony remained standing on either side. The Princess Louise wore a dress of lilac silk, slashed with bars of black velvet, and the Princess Beatrice a maize-coloured frock, trimmed with dark green velvet. As the Queen took her seat on the throne she nearly lost her crown, owing to the entanglement of her long white strings, which fell backward from the cap, and which, as her Majesty seated herself, caught under her dress and almost pulled the cap off her head. The Princess Beatrice succeeded, not without difficulty, in rescuing the strings, and a footstool being placed by the Lord Great Chamberlain, Her Majesty was finally arranged on the throne, the robe of state being partly thrown over her left shoulder by the Princess Louise.

The company remained standing till, by a slight gesture, the Queen commanded them to be seated, and a pause followed whilst Black Rod was despatched to summon the Commons. During this interval, the Lord Chancellor, who had gone out to meet the procession, and had returned in the train of the Queen, stood behind the Prince of Wales's chair. The Marquis of Winchester, with the cap of maintenance, stood on the steps of the throne to the right; the Duke of Richmond (his uniform now hidden under his peer's robe) to the left; whilst the Lord Privy Seal, the Earl Marshal, and the Lord Great Chamberlain, stood before the throne.

The perfect silence which reigned through the chamber after the Queen was seated was broken by the rush of many feet, and from behind the Bar were seen advancing the Speaker of the House of Commons, with the Serjeant-at-Arms carrying the mace, and close at their heels a turbulent throng. These

were the "Gentlemen of the House of Commons," to whom a portion of the speech was specially addressed, and when they had arranged themselves, not without considerable noise and some cries of "Order!" from noble lords comfortably seated on the floor of the House, the Lord Chancellor advanced to the foot of the throne, and, kneeling, offered her Majesty the document containing the speech. The Queen mutely signed to the Lord Chancellor to keep it, and, rising, his lordship returned to his old position by the empty chair of the Prince of Wales, and there read the speech in a voice which resounded to the uttermost parts of the chamber.

When the end was reached the Queen rose, and bowing first to the left and then to the right, walked out, followed by the Princesses and the procession, having opened Parliament without uttering a single word. As she departed the brilliant company rapidly melted away, and the Session of 1876 had commenced.

Feb. 14.—Sir Stafford Northcote's Oratory.

For a man who, as he wrote to "my dear Granville" something more than a year ago, "at the age of sixty-five and after forty-two years of a laborious public life," thought himself "entitled to retire," Gladstone is uncommonly regular in his attendance at the House, and is singularly ready to fling himself into debate. To-night he sat with both gloves off, taking notes voluminously under the very nose of Stafford Northcote, who was moving in Committee the resolutions necessary to give effect to the purchase of the Suez Canal shares. Lowe was at it too, with his memoranda held within an inch of his eyebrows, and the gleam of battle lighting up his benevolent visage. On the whole the position was rather a trying one for the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but he acquitted himself admirably, and his speech was a model of conciseness which Cross would do well to take home and study.

That right hon. gentleman, as was testified by his speech on introducing the Commons Bill, is developing in an alarming manner evil tendencies that have been apparent ever since his success in the matter of the Artisans' Dwellings Bill. One of these failings is a taste for archæological research; the other for what in theatrical parlance is known as "playing to the gallery." To begin at the beginning is an excellent rule;

but when one having charge of a Bill for the Preservation of Commons in the year of grace 1876 goes back to the year 1801, and argues in detail for and against legislation which took place then, it would seem to be pushed a little too far. What the House of Commons wanted to know from Cross was, what was he going to do about commons to-day, caring little what he thought of the disposal of the question in 1801, seeing that many places which at that date were commons are now, in the language of the Licensing Act, "populous places." But Cross would have his innings; and when he had exhausted 1801 he came up, fresh and smiling, on 1845. In the same way he is not to be denied his carefully prepared but woefully familiar little peroration, in which, with tears in his voice, he utters some amiable aspirations after the welfare of our old friend, the Working Man, or as, with a characteristic touch of originality, he generally calls him, "the labouring classes." Then there follows the inevitable cheer from members below the gangway opposite; some one rises to pay a tribute to the good intention with which the Conservative Home Secretary paves the common causeway; and Cross, with an annotated copy of his Bill on his knee, sharply turns over the pages with an air of absorbing interest, which intimates that he does not hear these trifling compliments, but is looking for something in the Bill.

Stafford Northcote is a bigger man than Cross. He is indeed big enough to forget himself when addressing the House, in the sense that Gladstone and Bright forget themselves, and in the sense that Stansfeld, Shaw Lefevre, and other official small fry, do not. His task to-night was most difficult; his accomplishment of it left little to be desired. Nothing could be clearer than his marshalling of facts. He possesses few natural gifts of oratory, save the prime one of capacity to make a clear statement on an involved case; and it is pretty to note that his solitary affectation of oratorical grace is strictly copied from Disraeli's manner. When the Premier has worked himself up to a certain pitch in his argument he indulges in a curious gesture, which he in his turn must have acquired from observation of children bathing. With elbows pressed closely against his sides, hands open and slightly turned inwards towards each other, he is accustomed in the heat of his oratorical passion to throw out his hands, palms upwards, jerkily towards the House, as if he were

splashing it with water which reached up to his own breast. This is a gesture which Northcote has caught to perfection, and now there remains for him only to consider on æsthetic grounds whether it was worth the trouble of acquisition.

Feb. 15. — Grant-Duff. Grant-Duff, who rarely comes to the House now, looked in to-night. He is, I always fancy, the most aggressively intellectual-looking man of the present generation. It is not for nothing that his birthplace should chance to be named Eden. But it should have been Eden before the Fall, and that it is unhappily otherwise is indicated by the postal direction, which instantly brings us down from the clouds by adding to the address the words, "near Banff." That is the one flaw in Grant-Duff's self-serenity, the drop that embitters the wine of his life. Eden would have been bearable; but "near Banff!"

Taking Banff as standing for mankind and mundane affairs generally, we may put it that Banff is the bane of Duff's existence. He could get along very well if his soul were not daily vexed by the general density of the minds with which he comes into contact, and with the particular incompetence of our public men. He has struggled long and nobly to regenerate the world in which he finds his mind engulfed and tarnished, as a meteor, falling from the starry sky, is suddenly dulled and extinguished amid the clay of a ploughed field. He mingled freely with contemporary youth in the academic grove, what time stern manhood was engaged upon the architectural undertaking since so grandly accomplished. He did not disdain to wear such honours as our poor Universities have at their disposal. He wrote a book in which "European Politics" were not only "studied," but were directed. Later he took a "Political Survey," in which everything was settled for the present generation, and the expense of town houses and other charges incidental to attendance upon the supererogatory meetings of a superfluous Parliament might have been spared, not only to the House of Commons, but to the House of Lords and to the other distinguished assembly known as Convocation. He has been Lord Rector of the University of Aberdeen, and has descended to the care of the pettier interests of the people of India.

From distant Elgin he has at stated intervals instructed the world on current events, and the world has turned a deaf ear to a voice attuned for finer tympanums than the waves of sound are wont to strike against in the gross atmosphere of Banff. He has no joy in life outside himself, and walks in lonely misery amidst the strange people who exist around him.

It is, in truth, a sad thing when a superior being thus gets astray in a lower planet, like a mental Gulliver cast adrift on Lilliput. The inhabitants are many in number, and hopelessly bind him with the tiny threads of their ignorance, their prejudice, and their folly.

Feb. 18.—Sir Stafford Northcote on Lord Hampton.

There was a stout fight in Committee to-night on the vote for the salary of Lord Hampton on his appointment to the office of First Civil Service Commissioner. The opposition was grounded on the allegations that the office was a sinecure specially created for the profit of Lord Hampton; that his lordship was at the time of his appointment past the age at which civil servants are superannuated; and that in any case his salary was £500 a year more than his predecessor had received. Anderson referring to the noble lord as "an ornamental commissioner," the Chancellor of the Exchequer, springing up, warmly observed, amidst prolonged laughter, that he "must protest against Lord Hampton being in any sense considered as an ornamental commissioner."

On a division the vote was agreed to by 87 votes against 62. The Committee immediately divided again on an amendment by Mundella to reduce the vote by £500. In this case the Ministerial majority was reduced to 16, a progress much cheered by the Opposition.

Feb. 21.—Mr. Lowe's lack.

Many people have wondered how it should have come to be a settled point in the opinion of politicians that Lowe will never be the leader of the party he adorns. In respect of keenness of intellect and classical culture he has not his superior on the front Opposition bench; as a parliamentary debater only Gladstone and Bright excel him. Mentally to compare him with Harcourt, for example, is to conjure up a vision of a rough nugget of gold linked with a specimen of Brummagem

bijouterie, ornate in workmanship and brilliant with bits of coloured glass. Yet Harcourt's chance of leading the Liberals in the House of Commons, absolutely infinitesimal as it is, is preferable to Lowe's. How should this be?

Lowe himself supplied the answer to-night, and it might well stand alone without enlargement or illustration. In order to lead a popular assembly one must sympathise with it, or at least understand it. Lowe's speech to-night on the Suez Canal debate demonstrates his positive inability to understand the House of Commons, or to sympathise with the sentiments of the English people. No one has keener sight for a canker-spot in a fair and apparently healthy body than Lowe. He swoops down on a solecism like a hawk on a sparrow. But he can only see the solecism or the canker, and whether, counting all the cost, it is worth exposing, is a consideration he is unable to take into account.

Just as he is by physical infirmity obliged to read his papers through a microscopic lens, so through mental infirmity he takes a microscopical view of questions of State policy. An inscrutable but all-wise Providence has deprived him of the sense of perspective. Thus, when he came to look at the question of the purchase of the Khedive's shares in the canal, and observed that £100,000 had been paid to Rothschild as commission on the arrangement for the transference of the purchase-money, that feature seemed to him to be exactly the same size as anything else in the prospect he was regarding, and, lying conveniently under the lens of his microscope, he came down to-night and devoted much fervour and skill to its exposition, to the total exclusion of consideration of the larger question of the effect which the purchase might have upon England's international position.

Nothing could have been less wise, unless it were that reference to the Alabama claims and the little crow of triumph because, when he, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, had a payment of three millions odd to make to a foreign state, so far from incurring a charge of £100,000, he had actually made the neat little commission of £5,000. The matter thus put, Lowe's triumph was legitimate. It undoubtedly was a clever and desirable thing that a Chancellor of the Exchequer, having a sum of three millions to pay to a foreign state, should

honourably have saved £5,000 by a careful study of the exchange market and the prompt seizure of a favourable opening ; and the cleverness became all the more brilliant when contrasted with the action of a Government who had actually paid £100,000 in order to effect an interchange of four millions. But here becomes apparent Lowe's fatal failing. He was utterly blind to the importance and significance of the facts that, whilst the transaction in which the £5,000 was saved was one in which England had, not without a smarting sense of degradation, paid an indemnity she had long protested she would not pay, the transaction in which the £100,000 had been lavished in commission was one popularly believed to have perpetually secured an open highway to India, and at the same time to have lifted England high in the estimation of Foreign Powers. Moreover, it was the Gladstone Ministry that paid the Alabama claims ; it was the Disraeli Ministry that bought the Suez Canal shares.

Here were two events held by common consent to be typical of the two extremes of a cringing domestic policy and a spirited foreign policy ; and in the very heyday of the House of Commons' newborn enthusiasm for the latter, with the popular acclaim at the news of the Suez Canal purchase ringing in his ears, Lowe haggled about an item of a hundred thousand pounds in the purchase money, and with a bewitching air of modesty asked the House to admire the Minister who had saved £5,000 in settling a debt paid on strict commercial principles as being the cheapest way of purchasing the forbearance of a choleric nation that possessed Dahlgren guns and Monitors !

Disraeli is a man of considerable resources, and is gifted with a larger share of constructive genius than might be thought by people who form a judgment on this point only by reading his novels. But if for a full week he had given his nights and days to contriving a plan by which the criticism of the Opposition on the Egyptian stroke of State should not only be nullified, but should be made ridiculous in the eyes of the House of Commons and abominable in the ears of the public, he could not have devised anything better than Lowe accomplished in this brief passage of his speech to-night. And yet here was Lowe peering round the house in palpable astonishment at the burst of derisive cheering that followed his argument, apparently

wondering whether he had unconsciously upset an inkpot or accidentally knocked a tumbler of water over Forster's legs, which were, as usual, loosely disposed in the neighbourhood of the seat of the leader of the Opposition, much to the terror of Lyon Playfair, who also affects that quarter, and will certainly some day be trodden on by his burly colleague. There is no appeal from the general verdict, that Lowe will never be in the House of Commons anything other than a free lance, a captain of forlorn hopes, whose value as an ally is chequered by the gaping wounds he, sometimes undesignedly, inflicts upon the friends he cherishes and the cause he has espoused.

CHAPTER X.

MR. DISRAELI'S DECADENCE.

The Mayor of Lostwithiel—Nobbling the Ballot-box—The Major on the Warpath—Mr. Fawcett as Diogenes—A portentous Quarrel—Mr. Disraeli's Management.

Feb. 22. — The Mayor of Lostwithiel. Dilke made his annual speech on Unreformed Corporations. Better than ever. Amongst the many good stories he told was one about the Mayor of Lostwithiel. It seems that when his worship gets drunk an effort is made to get him on the bridge which crosses the river and push him over the borough boundary line into the county, where he may be dealt with by the county police.

As he himself is the chief magistrate, and practically the corporation, a difficulty naturally arises when he is summoned for getting drunk within the borough limits.

Mar. 9. — Nobbling the ballot box. Ritchie called attention to the remarkable success recently obtained by the Irish members in securing days for bringing on their Bills and resolutions. How this is done is highly ingenious. When a member desires to bring on a motion or to introduce a Bill, he writes his name on a list, ruled with numbered lines, which lies

on the table where sit Sir Thomas May and his learned assistant-clerks. Say there are a score of names written on the paper, running down line upon line from one to twenty. When the Speaker takes the chair, the assistant-clerk, finding twenty names on the list, writes the figures 1 to 20 on a score of slips of paper, and, folding them up, places them in a box, which he shakes up as if he were about to throw a main with Sir Thomas. Meanwhile the numbered list of names is handed to the Speaker, and the Clerk, placing his hand in the box where the twenty counters are, draws one, and calls aloud the number, which may be 15. The Speaker, looking down the list, finds that Newdegate is No. 15, and calls out "Mr. Newdegate!" Whereupon the member for Warwickshire rises, and in a voice and with a mien suggestive of the untoward circumstance that he has just been drawn for the scaffold, or at least for conscription, gives notice that he will on that day four weeks bring in a Bill providing for the regulation of Monastic and Conventual Institutions.

Newdegate has in this imaginary case had the good luck to be drawn first, so, taking precedence with his motion, chooses his own day. He fixes "this day four weeks," because, according to the procedure of the House, that day is sure to be clear of private members' business. Members balloting may name any day, within one day of four weeks of the date of the ballot, for bringing on their motion. The first four weeks of a session are invariably filled up by the rush of motions of which notice is given on the opening night. But, as will be perceived, the working of the arrangement necessarily leaves "this day four weeks" clear. Accordingly that is the date generally seized upon by the lucky man who comes first out of the ballot.

With respect to Wednesdays another rule obtains. Wednesdays are available for appropriation in advance throughout the session, even from the opening night; and it was on this point that the strategy of the parliamentary veteran of the Home Rule party was brought to bear with a success that has nonplussed Parliament, has steeped the soul of Newdegate in a deeper shade of melancholy, and has added a fresh note to the wonderful diapason of Beresford-Hope's voice. It was brought about in this manner. There were a certain number of Bills

and motions which the Home Rulers desired to bring in—say a score. There were upwards of forty Home Rule members present on the opening day of Parliament, and every man of them wrote his name down on the Speaker's list as a token of his desire to give notice of a motion. The list numbered eighty-five, and it is evident that thus the Irish members had nearly a full half of the chances of the ballot. The first Irishman called, whoever he might be, gave notice for the earliest day on account of the most important motion on the list of the party. The next took up the one of second importance, and so on to the end. Motions and men sometimes got oddly mated, but that did not matter. They got in a large number of their Bills on the most favourable conditions, swallowing the Wednesdays wholesale, and making ruthless havoc with the precious heritage of the Tuesdays and Fridays.

But the strategy did not stop here. The Bills and motions left over from the first ballot were arranged in a list according to their relative importance. The united forty wrote their names down one after another on the notice-paper on the following night, and each man, furnished with a list, sat in his place waiting the time of the ballot. Say that a Bill for Amending the Law of Entail in Small Parishes in Ireland stood first on the list, and the name of Mr. Biggar issued first from the ballot-box. Biggar's notions upon entail are naturally limited, and may be erroneous. It is possible that business associations may lead him to suspect that entail is one of those foreign importations which come to this country in tin boxes hermetically sealed, warranted to be purely pickled, and designed to compete in economical households with the honest English ox-tail. But that makes nothing. Biggar will rise, and with the prefatory and defiant "Mr. Speaker, sur!" will give notice of his intention, "on this day four weeks," or on an early Wednesday if any be left, to introduce a Bill for Amending the Law of Entail in Small Parishes in Ireland. Before the day approaches Biggar will have been primed with arguments and facts by Butt, and will be able to discourse learnedly on entail, and demonstrate beyond cavil that it is a device deliberately invented for the completer oppression of Ireland.

The next member among the Home Rule party whose name is called will take charge of the succeeding Bill on the list,

and so on till all the available places are occupied. Then would be presented the spectacle, so familiar in these early days of the session, of Irish member after Irish member called upon in due order by the Speaker, and indicating by the silent raising of his hat that he has no notice to give (all the "party's" Bills or motions having been placed), whilst the discomfited English and Scotch members, marvelling at their persistent ill-fortune, are fain to follow suit, and to defer their notice till another day.

This is wonderfully clever, though slightly unscrupulous, and justifiable only by the axiom that declares all fair in love or war. The net consequence is that the long-familiar title "Ecclesiastical Wednesday" has become a misnomer, and the Wednesdays of the current session are given over to Ireland.

Mar. 7 (4.16 a.m.).

—The Major on
the warpath.

The Major has just left us, his disproportionate legs weary with the burden of a body they have carried round the division lobby seventeen times within three hours, not to take into account occasional excursions into the middle of the floor of the House; his sides aching with the tumultuous heaving of his gigantic bosom; his voice hoarse with shouting defiance in the ear of the Saxon; but with his crest raised by the proud consciousness that he has made a great fight for Ireland, and his soul serene with the certainty that the O'Gormans who have gone over to the majority will look down with satisfaction on the inheritor of their name, whose proudest boast is that he always votes with the minority.

During the few years the Major has been with us in the House, he has frequently distinguished himself by his enlightened advocacy of the rights of Ireland, and the privileges of Irish members. He excelled himself this morning, and demonstrated once more, and more than ever conclusively, that as long as Purcell O'Gorman can, by what convulsive action soever, draw his breath, so long shall a champion be forthcoming for sad-eyed Erin.

The proceedings three hours ago were at least intelligible. Anderson, nominating the Committee on Referees, had included in the aggregate of twenty-one only two Irish members, and these were not Home Rulers. The formality had been completed without consultation with Nolan, the Home Rule

Whip; and it was decided to raise the question in a formal and parliamentary manner by challenging Anderson's motion that the Committee should consist of twenty-one members, and insisting that it should be twenty-three.

It was the fixed and deliberate intention of the Home Rulers to take three divisions by way of unmistakably recording their protest. That done, Sullivan and Nolan wanted to stop. But when men put a heavily loaded wagon on a steep incline, they ought to be sure their break-power is sufficiently strong to bring it up short when the proper moment has arrived. They had set the Major going, and the Major was not to be stopped till he had run down. There he sat, with hat pressed over his eyebrows, arms folded, mouth twitching, stomach heaving, and Patriotism oozing out in thick beads of perspiration on his cheeks. In vain, Sullivan, Cowen, and even Nolan, implored him to desist, declaring that, if Ireland were not saved, honour was satisfied. In vain the little band he had gallantly led to defeat besought him to retire. Like Horatius "in another place"—

"Round turn'd he, as not deigning
Those craven ranks to see;
Naught spake he to Lars Porsena,
To Sextus naught spake he."

He only heaved and panted with an emotion that becomes sacred if we consider in what cause it was born, and judiciously saved his breath to shout the "Noes have it!" when the Speaker affirmed that the majority was with the Ayes.

"It's scan'lous! perfickly scan'lous!" he roared when the addition of Selater-Booth's name was moved. The Speaker mildly objected to the word, and suggested its withdrawal.

"Withdraw!" cried the Major, in a voice of thunder, rushing on to the middle of the floor.

A thrill went through the House when members beheld the Major standing there, and none could say what he would do next.

"Withdraw!" he roared again; "*of course I'll withdraw!*"

Everybody breathed again, and some one, affecting a hysterical excess of courage, suggested to the Major that he had better retire from the middle of the floor.

"What!" he retorted, with a fine scorn of the petty etiquette of a Saxon assembly; "mus'n't I speak outside that bit of carpet?"

But he returned to his place, and presently panted out at the head of a band of nine members, once more to record his protest against the attempt to ride roughshod over Ireland in the matter of a Committee on Referees.

The end was inevitable; for as there were only twenty-one members to be proposed, and as four, being Irish or Scotch, were held to be unobjectionable, it followed that there could be only eighteen divisions, inclusive of one on the aggregate number of the Committee. In a momentary fit of mental abstraction the Major permitted the name of Francis Goldsmid to pass unchallenged; and though he woke up, and gallantly strove to have it put up again, so that he might object, he failed.

This reduced the possible number of divisions to seventeen, and the Major was in them all. His following diminished, his co-teller gave up exhausted, hope had fled, defeat was inevitable. From a minority of twenty-one the little band of patriots had been reduced to eleven, then to ten, then to nine, then to seven, and finally to three. But the Major faltered not, nor did his purpose fail. The murky sky was paling in the East; the early milkman judiciously prepared his wares under the half-opened and wholly unsuspecting eye of the new morn; the drowsy night-cabman drove slowly homeward; pallid faces and wearied eyes were turned angrily towards the Major through the dawn-stricken gaslight of the House of Commons. But he, resolute and relentless in the cause of a country which, though down-trodden, is not dead, went on his way to the bitter end, and is at this moment fiercely glancing around Palace Yard in search of the cabs which have, as usual, mysteriously fled at his approach.

Patriotism is all very well, the drivers of the four-wheelers say, and a man is quite right to do his duty to his country; but they have their horses to pay for and their families to feed, and they really cannot drive twenty-eight stone at sixpence a mile.

Mar. 10. — Mr. Fawcett is wantonly destroying his great opportunities of becoming a power for good in the House of Commons, and is not only injuring himself, but is bringing into disrepute the simple principles of honesty and

integrity which are beyond doubt the mainsprings of his parliamentary action. He would be the Diogenes of the House of Commons ; and inasmuch as that personage appears to have been a great bore, the member for Hackney must be congratulated on his successful imitation.

When Diogenes called upon Antisthenes, and assumed a welcome though he had it not, the cynic is reported to have had such difficulty in getting rid of his unsolicited disciple that he struck him with his stick. The answer of Diogenes has been preserved over two thousand years.

"Strike me, Antisthenes," Diogenes said ; "but never shall you find a stick sufficiently hard to remove me from your presence while there is anything to be learned, any information to be gained, from your conversation and acquaintance."

Obviously a slight alteration is required in the sentence ; but it affects chiefly the possessive pronoun.

"Shout at me, Conservatives," Fawcett says, night after night ; "but never shall you find a shout sufficiently loud to remove me from your presence whilst there is anything to be learned, any information to be gained, from my conversation and acquaintance."

There are many things against which the House of Commons revolts, but this pedagogic manner is, perhaps, the most absolutely insufferable. It has no objection to learn : in fact, it has a strong hankering after information. But it will not have doses of knowledge violently thrust down its throat whilst Fawcett holds its nose. Whilst ordinary speakers instinctively attempt, more or less skilfully, to ingratiate themselves with the audience they address, Fawcett, as a matter of habit, does precisely the reverse. A man need not abjure soap, and live in a tub, as necessary preliminaries to being above all other considerations upright, honest, and truth-telling. Fawcett thinks otherwise, and he is continually rolling his tub about the floor of the House of Commons till both it and its inmate have become a common nuisance, from the presence of which members (when they can) take refuge in flight.

As this morbid self-conceit grows upon him, and as the importance of his position as the only honest and unpurchasable man in Parliament is magnified in his mind, he loses the art of clear and effective speaking with which he is naturally gifted, and

which, if well trained, might have lifted him into high authority. There was a brief period when he appeared to have grown out of the swaddling clothes of verbosity and undignified meddling which tripped him up in his earliest advances in favour. The responsibility cast upon him by the accident of a Bill introduced by him becoming a matter of life or death to a strong Ministry seemed to sober and steady him.* He weighed his words before uttering them, and as a natural consequence found that nine out of ten were not worth uttering. Thus he acquired a reputation for reticence which was a new joy to the House of Commons. Long accustomed to have the exordiums of his interminable harangues disturbed by the shuffling of the feet of members who passed out, and by cries for the division from those who remained behind, Fawcett had the rare satisfaction of hearing himself called for when he rose simultaneously with two or more speakers in a debate. Whilst this unaccustomed favour was in full growth he lost his seat, and the feeling of regret which found loud expression in the columns of the press was not confined to the Liberal journals. The honesty of purpose and sterling worth of the discarded member for Brighton were universally acknowledged, and all parties united in the hope that some other and more enlightened constituency would return him to the House.

The prayer has been answered, with most disastrous results to an unoffending assembly. Fawcett, the member for Brighton, was bad enough; but Fawcett, the member for Hackney, is as nearly as possible unbearable. All the old faults of his manner as a speaker remain in aggravated form. He pitches his voice in a key that must deafen the genial Serjeant-at-Arms, who sits just behind him; he mouths the commonest words in a way that would be ludicrous if it were not lamentable; and he solemnly, impressively, and withal monotonously chants his way through the long avenues of his speech with a sound and fury of emphasis that signify nothing, falling as the emphasis does just where chance may in the regular beat bring it due.

A startlingly comical effect—which it is impossible to convey in writing without the aid of a stave of music—was brought about on Tuesday night when, speaking on the subject of the Railway Passenger Duty, Fawcett had occasion to mention in complimentary terms the firm of Messrs. Baxter, Rose, and

* The Dublin University Bill, 1873.

Norton. The rhythm of the phrase lent itself oddly to the accidental emphasis just then falling due, and the innocent words were mouthed with a thunderous modulation, a magnificent scorn, a blood-stirring contempt, ludicrously remote from the intent with which they were introduced. In brief, Fawcett speaks as a young lady writes—in italics; and the italics, being mechanically cast about, often turn up in the wrong place.

This mannerism is irritating, but when is added to it an aggravating and aggressive assertion that the speaker is the only honest man in the assembly, it becomes clear how Fawcett, whose singleness of purpose all acknowledge, is a member whose interposition in debate is greeted with a low groan of despair. It was not till after long sufferance of the speeching of his three friends that poor Job burst forth with the bitter cry: "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you." But then Job's special forte was patience. Moreover, Bildad the Shuhite was quite a modest low-voiced man as compared with Fawcett.

Mar. 17.—A portentous quarrel. Whalley, bringing on once more the Tichborne case, gave a fresh interest to the subject by the indication of a point of departure between himself and Kenealy. In fact, he went so far as to refer with emphatic gesture to Kenealy (who sat two benches below him) as "this advocate of that unhappy man in Dartmoor," and, amid much laughter, declined to justify the conduct of the member for Stoke, and even threw doubt on the propriety of the means by which that person has acquired a large fortune. Cross, in reply, said he had seen no paper submitted to the Home Office which in the slightest degree altered his opinion of the justice of the sentence passed upon the convict Orton.

Kenealy, rising as the Home Secretary sat down, said, in a slow, deliberate manner, he had considered whether he should answer the observations of Whalley, and had come to the conclusion that they were beneath his notice—a decision which the House received with hearty and prolonged laughter.

April 5.—Mr. Disraeli's management. It is little more than a year ago Disraeli's adroit and happy management of the House of Commons was the theme of universal praise. He always knew when to be silent and when to speak, and when he

spoke he always said the right word. Before last session closed it seemed as if a glamour had come over him, and from the most skilful he became the most maladroit of Ministers. How far this glamour has darkened around him in the current session it would be an old story to tell. It is written in the leading articles of all the morning newspapers; it is the chatter of the clubs; it is spoken of in the House of Commons; and, worse than all, it is acknowledged in whispers that are daily growing louder by the loyal party he has educated. It would be a sad ending to a brilliant career to see Disraeli openly discredited in the assembly of which he has for thirty years been a chief ornament. The House has narrowly skirted that dangerous point within the past fortnight. If things go on as they have progressed since Parliament met, it will to all men's sorrow be inevitably reached.

Disraeli is never dull except when he deliberately sets himself to make a speech that shall be grave and statesmanlike; and as he rarely does that injustice to his special faculties, he has not, up to within the past eight months, seriously endangered his popularity. But of late, in increasing measure, he is losing his airy grace of manner, just sufficiently spiced with audacity, and his felicitousness of phrase, always admirably spiced with personality. When these are gone, the House, looking at what is left, finds that it is not much and is not at all desirable. Just as a prima donna, accustomed for years to the applause of the multitude, finds her voice failing, and, hysterically rushing for the once accustomed E, comes down with a shriek on D flat, shocking the pained ear of the pit, so the Prime Minister, aiming to be gaily audacious, misses the exact pitch and becomes simply rude, and where he once drew forth the burst of pleased laughter now hears the ominous murmur of subdued resentment.

Another and a more serious charge has been made in journals not always accustomed to call spades spades, and has been repeated from his place in the House by a member. Disraeli has always made a specialty of answering awkward questions in a manner which shall turn the tables upon his interrogator. He has had some brilliant successes in this direction, and men have grown accustomed to look upon an attempt to "draw Dizzy" at question time in the light of a choice ante-prandial luxury, a

sort of intellectual absinthe. But in an assembly where personal honour and actual verity are held dear, tight-rope dancing over falsehood must be exceedingly cleverly done in order to find favour. As Anderson bluntly put the case the other day, "the House likes smart answers, but it likes the truth much better."

This is a great fact which in these days Disraeli appears only dimly to comprehend. No one says that he would deliberately falsify facts; but it remains true that he is not successful in making facts clear when he rises ostensibly with such intent. Moreover—and this is worse than all—he does his spiriting with truth so awkwardly that he deceives no one, and the intended victim is infinitely more furious than if he had been absolutely and neatly taken in. In Trevelyan's "Life of Lord Macaulay" there is quoted a letter of Macaulay's which supplies some notion of the position into which Disraeli has fallen in the House of Commons. Talking about Metternich and Cardinal Mazarin, Talleyrand said to Macaulay—

"Le Cardinal trompait, mais il ne mentait pas. Or M. de Metternich ment toujours et ne trompe jamais."

In other days Disraeli might have passed a competitive examination with the Cardinal. To-day, alas! he is more like the Prince—at least to the extent that *il ne trompe jamais*.

In the systematic efforts to weaken, and finally break up, the Ministry, Disraeli has not to any great extent, or in any new direction, been helped by his colleagues. Ward Hunt, it is true, still blunders along, doing the wrong thing at the worst moment, and skilfully evading even a momentary stumble on the right path. Adderley is as benevolently helpless and as amiably addled as ever; and Holker is increasingly successful in showing with how little knowledge of law, of men, and of things one may, under Providence, become Attorney-General. But Stafford Northcote is still a tower of strength to an occasionally bewildered Ministry. Cross happily and placidly steers his course by a line drawn as nearly as possible down the middle of the floor of the House. Gathorne Hardy has been publicly blessed by Sir George Balfour, and has felt the warm tears of General Shute trickle in pure joy down his back. Sandon is always ready to deliver a conciliatory and explanatory speech, fifteen minutes long, in reply to questions from gentlemen opposite. Selwin-Ibbetson has been away a good deal. John

Manners, though he has absolutely abolished telegraph cards, has issued a firman directing that any person handing in a telegram may, upon payment of twopence, demand a receipt for his money; and Hicks-Beach has shown how far human nature may, under a sense of public duty, bear up against the clamour of a body of men who appear as incapable of feelings of gratitude as they are insensible to appeals to reason, and who see in a request granted or a boon conceded only a fresh opening for a new demand.

On the opposite benches the enemy is scarcely more formidable than it was a year ago. Actual union is just as remote, and the condition of discipline is forcibly illustrated by the fact that Fawcett is running on his own account a resolution affecting the Royal Style and Titles Bill, when Hartington has wisely decided that there has been enough of fighting on this ground, and that a continuance of the struggle would tend only to the advantage of the Government.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MERCHANT SHIPPING BILL.

Sir C. Adderley and Sir John Holker—Mr. Lowe and the Queen—Critics of the Merchant Shipping Bill—Sir Robert Peel—The Major on Sunday Closing—Mr. Disraeli wakes up.

Apr. 26.—Sir C. Adderley and Sir John Holker. It must be admitted that Adderley has been grievously sinned against ever since he took office in 1874. The original sin was to make him President of the Board of Trade, especially at an epoch when legislation on Merchant Shipping was imperative. This was followed by conferring upon him the official assistance of Cavendish Bentinck, a cruel freak, sufficient to ruin a much stronger man. Next, when by the substitution of Edward Stanhope this last injury was removed, and there was some hope of his receiving valuable assistance alike at the Board of Trade and in Parliament, Stanhope is taken ill, and Sir Charles is left single-handed, or what is infinitely worse, with Holker for assistant.

It is fair, in regarding Adderley's conduct of the Merchant Shipping Bill, to remember all this. But there still remains the public interest to be considered; and the Premier is daily faced by the question whether, in politely refusing to allow the President of the Board of Trade to withdraw from a task manifestly too big for him, he is not sacrificing public interest to private feeling. It is impossible not to observe that Disraeli regularly shrinks from connecting his own personality with the perennial failure of the management of the Merchant Shipping Bill. As surely as the Bill is down for Committee, so surely does the Prime Minister, ordinarily the most regular and patient attendant upon the debates of the House, absent himself from the Treasury bench. But he must hear something of what takes place, and cannot fail to have a more or less vivid idea of the state of hopeless confusion which reigns during the discussion in Committee on the Bill.

The actual condition of affairs may be sharply realised by the simple statement of the fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has literally been told off to sit in constant attendance upon the President of the Board of Trade and the Attorney-General, ready to take the edge off their blunders. The public interest apart, such an arrangement is not fair to Stafford Northcote, whilst it is incredible that a man of spirit, placed in the position of Adderley, should submit to a procedure unprecedented in parliamentary history. How is the Queen's Government to be carried on if the head of a great department is avowedly so utterly incompetent to take charge of a Bill promoted by himself that the head of another great department is deputed to supervise and to watch him as a nursing-child is attended in its early efforts to walk?

To-night, when the House went into Committee on the Bill, Disraeli and other Ministers who had been present at question time quitted the Treasury bench, leaving thereon Adderley, the Attorney-General, and Northcote. Sir Charles took the nominal lead, answering objections and stating arguments, with the natural and inevitable result that in about half an hour the Committee was in a hopeless muddle, and the Government seriously compromised. Then slowly and solemnly the Attorney-General rises, gravely leans his hand upon the table, and uplifting a voice which is like the sound of the

creaking of many doors, completes the disorder, knocks away any props the unfortunate President of the Board of Trade may, inadvertently and unconsciously, have left to himself, and irretrievably confuses the question by placing it in a cross-light of misconception, and interweaving with it a complication of misrepresentation.

Holker, moreover, introduces a new element into the debate, which is not slow in working its effect. Adderley, to do him justice, appears conscious of the fact that Heaven has not blessed him with ability quickly to grasp an idea, or hopefully to grapple with an unexpected argument. There is about him an absence of self-assurance which covers a multitude of offences, and inclines the House to deal tenderly with his many *lâches*. The Attorney-General, on the contrary, is aggressively of opinion that, though household suffrage and the ballot may have sent to the House of Commons a few dull-brained heavy men of dim mental vision, none of them sit for the borough of Preston. There is something dreadfully exasperating in the compassionately superior manner in which he regards the House when he addresses it. Dogberry delivering his charge to the Watch is the nearest parallel that comes to mind. The House naturally resents this, and when, as conspicuously occurred to-night, the Attorney-General, apparently not comprehending the question nor recognising the drift of the debate, makes some astounding declaration the very opposite of what has just previously been put forth by his colleagues, there is a howl of disgust and a general movement of impatient contempt. Then Northcote interposes, and does all that a sensible, able, habile man may do to patch up the difficulty. Sometimes he succeeds, at the expense of concessions to the Opposition; often he feels that immediate retreat would be too obviously damaging to the Ministry, and the retreat is covered by a division which strains party-fealty to its utmost strength.

This may be skilful management combined with commendable fidelity to an unpopular colleague. The questions in which the public have some concern are, how long is it to last, and whether it would not be better, since the Chancellor of the Exchequer is really in supreme charge of the Merchant Shipping Bill, to leave it in his hands altogether? The difficulties of dealing with such a measure are of themselves considerable. But the Merchant Shipping Act Amendment Bill *plus* Sir Charles Adderley *plus*

Sir John Holker, appears a burden too heavy for any man to carry through the House of Commons.

May 2.—Mr. Lowe Charles Lewis, unabashed by the way the House and the Queen. unanimously receives him, once more appeared prominently on the scene, bringing forward a motion for returns relating to the oath of certain Privy Councillors. He explained that he was actuated in this step by the publication of Lowe's statement, made at Retford, to the effect that two Prime Ministers before Disraeli had been asked to pass a Bill making the Queen Empress of India, and had declined. He said he had written to Lowe, asking him whether the report was accurate, and created much merriment by reading the reply received, in which Lowe bluntly remarked, "My recent speech at Retford contains nothing relating to you," and therefore declined to answer his question.

Lowe now said he was arraigned, not as a member of the House, not as Privy Councillor, but as a spouter at a convivial dinner. He pointed out the inconvenience which would arise if the House were to "follow in the line of business" in which Lewis had set out, and flatly declined to answer any of that person's questions.

Disraeli said he regretted the motion had been made, but he regretted still more the speech of Lowe. The statement made by Lowe was, he said, monstrous if true; and, if not true, must be described by an epithet Disraeli could not find in his vocabulary. Betraying an unusual degree of excitement, he, amid loud and prolonged cheering from the Ministerialists, protested against the conduct of Lowe, inasmuch as he had commented upon the character of the Sovereign, and had held up to public infamy the conduct of her chief adviser. Attempting to cite the testimony of the Queen as to the truth of Lowe's original statement, he was met by loud cries of "Order!" in the face of which he resumed his seat. The Speaker, rising, explained the rule which prohibits the introduction of the Sovereign's name in debate. Disraeli said it was a very small matter, and he only desired to say that the Queen had authorised him to state that with no Minister, and at no time, had such circumstances happened as were described in the Retford speech.

Lewis offered to withdraw his motion; but this being thwarted by members on the Liberal side, a division took place, when the resolution was carried by 91 votes against 37. Lowe walked out when the division was called. Disraeli, all the Ministers present, and the Conservatives as a party voted for the amendment.

May 8. — Critics
of the Mer-
chant Shipping
Bill.

The Merchant Shipping Bill happily passed through Committee to-night, after occupying, according to Adderley's estimate, six weeks of Government time. Within that period it has brought out many new debaters, and has testified afresh to the catholicity of the mind and the universality of the sympathies of several distinguished men. Foremost amongst these is Harcourt, who is ready to take a leading part in debate on any subject, and knows as much of merchant shipping as he does of agricultural holdings. Frequently he has sat on the otherwise not well-filled front Opposition bench whilst the Merchant Shipping Bill was in Committee, and has amused himself up to dinner-time by tantalising poor Adderley with profound criticisms on successive clauses. Then he has gone to dinner, and returning between ten and eleven has thrown himself into the fray with a hilarity that has occasionally been heavy, and a subtlety that has sometimes been over-refined. But his name frequently crops up in the debates all through, and the country may well feel a sense of sweet restfulness, cherishing the thought that there is one man on the front Opposition bench who is equal to any emergency, and is ready to care for us under whatever flag popular rights or interests are attacked.

This is the more welcome in view of the Merchant Shipping Bill, because the hydra-headed leaders of the Opposition have not taken that part in moulding the measure, or at least in superintending the process of moulding, which might have been expected from them. A good stout fight has been made for the British sailor; but he has nothing for which to thank the leaders of the Opposition. Harcourt has, as mentioned, sharpened his appetite and assisted his digestion by means of the Bill. Henry James has made several learned speeches, in which he has accomplished the easy task of making the Attorney-

General look ridiculous even in the eyes of the learned Judge-Advocate-General. Forster has said a word occasionally when he has chanced to be stretching his legs in front of the table; and Shaw-Lefevre has seized one or two opportunities of showing at length how some particular clause or some proposed amendment was precisely the same as something which he introduced, proposed, was about to propose, or was prevented from proposing, when he filled the office of his "hon. friend opposite."

It is a peculiarity specially felt in the case of Shaw-Lefevre that he has in his time filled several offices. He has been Secretary to the Board of Trade, Under-Secretary for the Home Department, and Secretary to the Admiralty; and so sure as any debate springs up on the affairs of any one of these great departments, so certain is Shaw-Lefevre to jump up, and in many words rapidly intoned to show how the proposal now before the House is identical with "a Bill I had the honour to introduce when I filled the office of my hon. friend," or "with a scheme I had commenced to work out when I was at the Home Office," or "with proposals I had matured during my term of office at the Admiralty." The coincidences are remarkable; but towards the middle of May their recurrence grows monotonous.

It is the private members sitting on both sides who have chiefly made the Merchant Shipping Bill what it is, and a heterogeneous and remarkable combination of legislative talent is thus portentously brought to the front. Plimsoll has, though now and then evidently with great effort, refrained from advancing saltatory arguments in favour of his views. He has invariably addressed the House from the base of a pair of legs, and though he has from time to time hinted at the knowledge of black doings has called no one a villain. Norwood has established a character as a debater of great readiness and power, and in his share of the management of the bill in the interests of the shipowners has even given proofs of no inconsiderable skill as a party leader. His supremacy and authority have been notably disputed by David M'Iver, who sits on the opposite side, and is an exceedingly affectionate son. M'Iver has improved upon Forster's famous boast of "Quaker parentage" as an argument for special fitness to deal with a particular subject, and has advanced in the House the new and startling doctrine

of "hereditary knowledge" in absolute and unquestionable settlement of the load-line, the exact height to which deck cargo may be carried, and the precise number of months during which pork may be safely kept in pickle. Henry Havelock is somewhat prone to invoke the memory of his illustrious father in order to give weight to his own parliamentary utterances; and there are three or four other honourable members whose chief claim upon the attention of the House is that they are the bearers of names dear to English ears. But the practice of reminding the House of Commons of one's father is not a wholesome one, and may not safely be repeated.

In M'Iver's case "my good father," of whom we have heard several times, possesses the additional disadvantage that reference to his personality strikes no chord in the bosom of the British House of Commons. He may have been an estimable man, and the feeling which prompts his son so often to refer to him thus affectionately is certainly respectable. But there is no saying where the flood of family affection shall stop if it be not sternly dammed. We may in some future debate have Kay-Shuttleworth, whose innocuous presence is once more restored to us, quoting the opinion of those three maiden aunts of whose life he is the joy, and telling the House what is their view of the proper proportion of mangling machines to an industrial dwelling of fifty rooms.

In addition to a foible for his father, M'Iver has during the debates on the Bill displayed a weakness for dashing in with impossible amendments, which he urges in breathless tone, troubles Adderley or the Chancellor of the Exchequer to demonstrate the absurdity of, causes Raikes to put to the Committee, and then feebly declines to press; a process which, whilst calculated to cast a glow of satisfaction over the family hearth, as demonstrating the surprising way in which "David" is "making way in the House," is rather hard on an assembly that wants to get its work done.

M'Iver's physical incursion upon the debate is not the least remarkable phenomenon in connection with his personality. Anyone present during the debates on the Merchant Shipping Bill will observe, about three times out of five as successive speakers resume their seats, a figure suddenly spring up from the corner seat of the second bench below the gangway on the

Ministerial side, and, standing bolt upright, stare from right to left with white face and widely-opened eyes as if it saw a wraith. It might be thought it was a fantastic semaphore-signal worked by electricity, or a life-size Jack-in-the-Box, which Sir John Hay, who sits smiling near, had secretly projected by pressing with his foot a powerful spring hidden somewhere under the step of the gangway. But it is only M'Iver rising to "catch the chairman's eye," and who adopts this peculiar way of snapping at that organ as if it were a fly and precipitancy a necessity.

M'Iver's pertinacity has been fairly successful, but it has not altogether elbowed out of the debate Watkin Williams, who is marked by the possession of the rare faculty of never speaking on a subject without being master of it, and yet whose share in the debates of a Session is considerable; who is as modest as he is able; who is uncompromising in the assertion of his strongly-marked convictions, and yet is popular on both sides of the House; who is a stout friend and a courteous adversary; but who tempers a natural spirit of geniality and a constant consideration for the feelings of others by stubbornly displaying a considerable surface of crimson necktie.

Nor has the member for Birkenhead quite snuffed out Gorst with his unaffected concern for the welfare of the Ministry; nor Lord Eslington, true working-man's friend, with his warm heart, his strong common-sense, and his unwavering fidelity to what he regards as the interests of the labouring classes; nor Gourley, whose practical suggestions are invariably worth listening to, though their effect be somewhat marred by the nervousness of the manner with which they are communicated; nor Ritchie, who at least on one occasion showed that he can give effective expression to strong and honest feeling; nor Rathbone, who is more than ever like a model vestryman; nor Joseph Cowen, who is the nearest approach to the realisation of the fabulous creation of the poet's brain, the man who did good by stealth and blushed to find it fame; nor Morgan Lloyd, who ought to be a constant delight to the greater portion of mankind as supplying a living proof of what small measure of mental virility is needed to make a Queen's Counsel and a member of Parliament. All these have had their say, and these are the men who in a greater or less degree have made the Merchant Shipping Bill.

May 11. — Sir Robert Peel. The Royal Titles Bill up again on a motion by Henry James, designed to restrict the use of the title "Empress" to matters connected with the internal affairs of India. The Government made it a vote of confidence, and the whipping up was tremendous. Dawson Damer, who has not been seen in the House since he sat down on Disraeli's knee in an endeavour to pass between the table and the Treasury bench, has been brought forth from retirement and gave his vote with the Government. Peel spoke just now, patronisingly patting Hartington on the back, and getting in return a slap in the face, which greatly surprised him.

What a remarkable man the baronet is! In personal appearance he is a cross between Victor Emanuel and the late Napoleon III., being not quite so ugly as the former, and considerably less profound-looking than the latter. As a Parliamentary speaker he is not a bad imitation of Smollett. But he has less literary culture, and, when setting himself to raise a laugh, trusts more to absolute buffoonery than to incisive if coarse invective. He made a terrible mess of a reference to his late brother's Victoria Cross, which was evidently intended by way of peroration, but got in at the wrong place, and became part of a sentence that ended in chaos; and he betrayed his fragmentary acquaintance with a familiar parable by talking in the singular number of "the young woman" who forgot to trim "her" lamp. On the whole, though the House laughed loudly, as it will laugh at anything after dinner and a long spell of dull debate, the exhibition was not creditable to "Sir Peel," or honourable to the name he bears.

May 12. — The Major on Sunday closing. The Government were defeated to-night on a motion moved by Richard Smyth in favour of Sunday Closing in Ireland. The motion was carried by 224 votes against 167. Gladstone warmly supported it, and was followed, after profuse declarations of diffidence at the conjuncture, by Major O'Gorman. After defending the Chief Secretary for Ireland from the strictures of Bright, the Major addressed himself to the arguments of the case, contributing as his share the axiom that "a man has a right to take as much liquor as he can walk away with." He proceeded, amid roars of laughter, to draw an affecting picture of respectable

farmers in Ireland denied under the operation of the proposed regulation the privilege of "taking something on a Sunday." "Men who love their landlords, and whose landlords love them." "Men," the Major added in a tremulous voice, whilst the crowded House roared with laughter, "whose lives Plutarch might have written."

"If you pass this Bill," he thundered in conclusion, "you will have a revolution in Ireland to-morrow, or," he added, when his voice might be heard above the roar of laughter, "or, you ought to have one."

Then he sat down, and Disraeli abandoning his evident purpose of addressing the House in reply to Gladstone, the division was called.

June 8.—Mr. Disraeli wakes up. House met to day after the Whitsun Recess. Amongst others Disraeli came back to work happily recovered from an illness which was not without grave concern for those who had closely watched its effects upon the fragile frame. He began to take a distinct turn for the better on the Tuesday night before the adjournment for the Whitsun Recess, when he saw Bright and Lowe have "a little turn-to" on the question of Parliamentary Reform. Up to the moment when Lowe rose the Premier had sat mute and motionless on the Treasury bench, with head sunk on breast, lack-lustre eyes looking steadfastly at nothing, and cheeks sallow and sunken. He was roused by the sound of a familiar voice talking, as it had talked nine years ago, about Reform; and when, as Lowe reseated himself, Bright rose from his side and girded at his whilom adversary and sometime colleague with much of the vigour of the olden time, Disraeli raised his head, shook himself together with familiar gesture, and though he had seemed as he entered the House to bring with him strength barely sufficient to cross the floor, he presently flung himself into the fray, and astonished everybody—particularly Stafford Northcote, to whom the task had been specially assigned—by winding up the debate himself.

Since that effort his convalescence has been assured, and to-night it is surely completed. A week's quiet rest at Hughenden, where he has been lazily watching the washing of the sheep and the bedding out of the geraniums, has finished

the work commenced by the voluntary disburdening of Lowe's conscience, and every one about the House is happier for the knowledge that the Premier is better.

Near him, a picture of rude health and subdued intellectual force, looms Ward Hunt, with the spray from the North Sea glistening in his beard and the freedom of the rolling wave visible in his gait.

CHAPTER XII.

THE OPPOSITION SHOW FIGHT.

A Whip's speech—More words from the Major on Sunday closing—Lord Henry Lennox and the Lisbon Tramways Co.—Lord Sandon and Lord Frederick Cavendish—Mr. Whalley and the Jesuits—An all-night sitting—Mr. Disraeli's rejuvenescence.

June 2.—A Whip's speech. Towards midnight, during the discussion on the Civil Service Estimates, there happened one of

those incidents which make memorable rare nights in the revolving Session. Adam made a speech, nay, two speeches! Why Adam's oratorical essays should be subject for special remark, or who indeed Adam is, are queries that would doubtless rise to the lips of the average reader of parliamentary debates. And yet Adam is alike one of the most popular and the most indispensable members of the House. The chief whip of the Liberal party at a period of sudden reverse, when the issue of a summons to a division is identical with an invitation to assist at a defeat, he has never lost heart or abated one jot of hope or spirits. Cheery amongst the cheerless found, he has performed his thankless and weary task just as carefully, completely, and assiduously as he was wont to do when his two-scored missive brought a safe majority for Gladstone, and a note with "three lines" filled the Liberal benches and thronged the bar and the galleries with the overplus of eager adherents.

The influence of regular preponderance or of unvarying defeat is a force in politics the weight of which only a whip can justly estimate. Under such circumstances as the Liberals

found themselves two years ago, and even in the vastly improved condition of to-day's affairs, the hardest thing in the world is to get the minority to make the most of itself. With an assured majority of from fifty to seventy at the command of the Government, members in Opposition are apt to be careless whether the majority be fifty or seventy.

"We are sure to be beaten, and one more or less is no matter," is the excuse with which many a man in these evil days permits himself to disregard Adam's notes of urgency.

That is a hard thing when a man is labouring to rally a disorganised force, and make it show a decent front. To battle with it day after day, to resist the strong temptation to give up the unequal struggle in which one's own side is only half-hearted, require the possession of great courage, a strong sense of duty, infinite patience, and unfailing good temper. These qualities meet in Adam, and his task is consequently accomplished with so little friction that its difficulty is apt to be underrated and its importance undervalued.

In Adam's case the sacrifice made to public duty is the greater, because he had in the last days of Gladstone's Government been emancipated from the thralldom of the office of whip, and had assumed a position in the Ministry ostensibly of a higher rank, and certainly preferable alike in respect of ease and emolument. It was as Chief Commissioner of Works that he retired from her Majesty's Government in 1874, and as such he was entitled to sit at his ease on the front Opposition bench, to come when he liked, go home when he pleased, and, when opportunity offered or could be made, to speak at the House, showing it how much better the Department of Works and Buildings was administered as compared with the former administration of "my noble friend opposite." But when the new Parliament met it was speedily found that Adam was indispensable in his former capacity, and without any fuss he quietly returned to the work his share of which he might well have hoped was done. Under depressing circumstances, of a kind which do not befall a great and triumphant party thrice in a century, he unostentatiously and uncomplainingly set himself to do the political drudgery of a disorganised and dispirited party.

It was pretty to see Dyke run in to-night on the news

flashing through the lobbies and corridors that "Adam was up." Sir William knows the fearsome joy of vocally addressing an assembly one half of which are accustomed to regard him as a polite though peremptory letter-writer. Like the late Mr. Hamilton, he also has made his single speech, and showed, as Adam did to-night, that he is not silent because he has not the gift of saying in easy straightforward language what he has at heart to utter. But as a rule the oratorical deliverance of the whips of this generation do not run beyond a single speech. Lord Wolverton, when Mr. Glyn and whip to a triumphant party, made his one speech, being for the rest of his House-of-Commons existence content with delivering those brief addresses, often more cheered than the most brilliant harangues, in which "the Ayes to the Right" were what they should be, and "the Noes to the Left" fell something below the computation of the opposite party.

July 12. — More words from the Major on Sunday closing.

Smyth, following up his success of two months ago has brought in a Bill closing public-houses in Ireland on a Sunday. The discussion was continued for some time, the chorus of general approval being varied by Roebuck, who declared that "it was contrary to the spirit of civilisation to legislate on a subject like this." Major O'Gorman also was fain to declare himself, after mature consideration, "not the least more friendly to the Bill than he was before." He drew largely on his own experience to show how hurtful the passage of the Bill would be to the community at large, and how subversive of the finer and more generous feelings of human nature.

A story he related of what had happened when a field of hay belonging to him had been "turned" amid a brief gleam of sunshine in a wet season, particularly interested a now fairly crowded House. He dwelt at some length upon the injustice that would be done to the devout farmer in Ireland, who "having adored his God in the morning went out at two o'clock on a Sunday afternoon to get a glass of ale or porter," and concluded by "beseeching" English members not to vote for "a Bill which would, if it became law, inflict upon Ireland a canker of lawlessness, drunkenness, and debauchery." The Bill was, nevertheless, read a second time without a division.

July 17. — Lord Henry Lennox and the Lisbon Steam Tramways Co. The questions disposed of, Henry Lennox rose from the second bench behind the Treasury bench, and craved the indulgence of the House whilst he made a personal statement. He proceeded to refer to Lord Coleridge's remark, whilst presiding at the case of "Twycross v. Grant," that an explanation was necessary from the directors of the Lisbon Steam Tramways Company. Lord Henry said he had joined the board of directors at the request of the Duke of Saldanha, who had asked him to do so because he was personally acquainted with Portugal. He knew nothing of the preliminary contracts or agreements which had been disclosed in a court of law, nor had he seen those "manly letters" which Mr. Grant had written, suggesting that the scheme should be abandoned and the money returned to the subscribers, which letters, indeed had never been laid before the board. His remuneration as a director was to be £100 a year, in addition to which he received one hundred shares as a qualification. Of these he returned fifty when he left the board. He had bought with his own money 300 shares, and was a heavy loser by his connection with the company. He added that he made that statement as an independent member, having thought it proper to place his resignation in the hands of the Prime Minister, and await attacks upon his honour from whatever point of the House they might come. He was, during the delivery of his speech, twice applauded from both sides of the House, and a general cheer marked the conclusion of his short address.

Disraeli next came forward, thinking it due to his noble friend and the House that he should "state what he knew of this affair." He had, he said, on Friday, received a written intimation from a gentleman opposite, informing him that he would to-day make certain charges against Henry Lennox. He had communicated this fact to his noble friend, who said "these things" had happened five years ago, when he was a private member, and he wished to defend his conduct from the same position. He had, therefore, tendered his resignation. The House had heard his statement, and Disraeli "could not reconcile it with his feelings to precipitate a decision."

Trevelyan, "the hon. gentleman opposite" referred to, corrected Disraeli in his account of the communication that had passed between them. After what had just happened he would

not enter further into the case. He had very good reason for calling the attention of the House to the matter, believing it necessary to bring about, as a tribute to public morality, the result which had just been announced. Lennox, who was deeply affected whilst Disraeli was speaking, sitting with his face buried in his hands, left the House as soon as Trevelyan had finished.

July 19. — Lord Sandon and Lord Frederick Cavendish.

Mundella, whom no one would suspect of having read "Don Juan," once described Lord Sandon as

"the mildest-manner'd man
That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat."

That was a wonderfully happy description at the moment, hitting off the situation in a couplet. The first impression one gains of the Vice-President of the Council is, that his manners are exceedingly mild; and on further observation comes the conviction that the mildness covers a capacity for righteous wrath upon occasion shown, and masks a pretty strong determination to carry out deliberate purposes. To Lord Frederick Cavendish belongs the distinction of having demonstrated the existence of the wrathful element in the constitution of the Vice-President of the Council, and of having made him roar as ungently as if he had no sympathy with the habits of the sucking dove. It was on clause 13, page 8, line 15, of the Education Bill, Lord Frederick struck fire. He gurgled out some remarks which brought the amiable Lord Sandon to his feet in a state of rage ill suppressed behind the sweet smile that still wreathed his lips, and Lord Frederick heard some plain language about his propensity for precipitating peaceful assemblies into the horrors of war.

The rebuke was not altogether uncalled, for for Frederick is, truly, a terrible man for taking unexpected headers into the surf of controversy. It is perhaps this feature of unexpectedness which lends an added force to his sallies. The House is pursuing a humdrum discussion on some unattractive topic, when there appears at the table a gentleman who is so singularly like an exaggeration of Hartington that the stranger rubs his eyes and marvels if it can be that distinguished statesman before he became amenable to the culture of experience and

Parliamentary practice. But it is only Lord Frederick Cavendish, and presently there will be a little row.

Lord Frederick when addressing the House, stands at the table in precisely the same attitude as Hartington, only more so. He has the same lack of clearness of tone, the same fault of dropping his voice when he reaches the culminating point of his sentence, and the same tendency to fall into a sing-song intonation. Only all these peculiarities are exaggerated and magnified, and we have the opportunity of knowing how much worse Hartington might be if he were to try. One result of Lord Frederick's peculiar style is that he is very difficult to follow through a speech of any length, and thus the larger portion of members have the luxury of surprise added to the little gratification of a row, when, after dozing off under the influence of his morphitic eloquence, they are roused by a cry of "Oh!" or a shout of "Order!" and find that he has been "saying things" about somebody opposite.

Thus he moved Sandon to anger this morning, and the Committee on the Education Bill beheld the unusual spectacle of the noble lord in charge of the measure fiercely hitting out at the noble lord who had just sat down, and laying to his charge the sin of throwing the apple of discord among a company of peaceably-disposed men. But Sandon's anger was of brief duration, and wound up with a comically earnest protest against the conduct of the person who could have made him angry. On the whole, during a long and wearying debate, constantly attacked in front, in flank, and in rear, accused on the one side of favouring sectarianism and on the other of favouring secularism, Sandon has displayed a command of temper and a faculty of management for which no parallel can be found, unless we turn to Hicks-Beach when in charge of an Irish Bill, and he is out of the limits of comparison, for as his difficulties are superhuman so is his patience supernatural. Save on the solitary occasion above cited, Sandon has not once placed himself under the disadvantage of losing his temper.

July 20. — Mr.
Whalley and
the Jesuits.

It gives a fillip to the interest which attaches to all Whalley's proceedings in the House to observe that of late his mind has shown a tendency to converge upon Disraeli, and to see in that otherwise inscrutable

personage the author of much of the evil which weighs down Protestant England. The Prime Minister gave scarcely satisfactory answers to a series of questions Whalley put to him some days ago on the subject of the Jesuits. He has since been a suspect, and to-night Whalley did not scruple to accuse him of being an arch-Jesuit, and the head of a Ministry of unquestionably Jesuitical tendencies.

It is in these references to forbidden subjects that the member for Peterborough shows his great natural talent as a debater. To introduce a direct reference to the Jesuits in a debate on the subject of Government grants to schools in poor districts requires a degree of courage and of skilful manipulation in the possession of which Whalley stands alone. By devious routes he reached the inevitable goal to-night, and was rewarded by the customary shout of contumely. Even Raikes, tender as he is to the idiosyncrasies of members, was fain to rise and suggest that the Jesuits were somewhat wide of the subject. Then Whalley made that skilful flank movement by which he at the same time brought the topic within parliamentary limits, and struck a heavy blow at the Premier by denouncing him as chiefest amongst Jesuits. After this nothing but calamity befell the gallant knight, who had not even a faithful Sancho Panza to ballast his enterprise with rough-hewn paving-stones of practical worldliness. He hurled the newly-found word "Algerine" at the policy of the smiling Sandon. He brought down on his poor grey head a lusty shout of indignation when he referred to the Ministry as "the least honest amongst European Governments." And he brought up Lord Francis Hervey with an angry protest when he poetically referred to the clergy of the Church of England as "these Sepoys."

How he was snubbed and laughed at; how plaintively he thanked the chairman for "trying to keep him in order;" how often he began to finish and how the sound of his voice always led him on to a fresh discourse, an umbrageous circular road in the middle or at the end of which the Jesuit was certain to be hidden; how time after time he was called to order; how meekly he resumed his seat when the chairman rose to expostulate; and how, appearing again, he recommended in subdued tone and gradually reached the emphatic inflection of voice which introduced the "foreign power," is a tale too sad to tell at length.

Aug. 3.—An all-night sitting.

The Elementary Education Bill as amended considered. Lord Robert Montague brought forward an amendment permitting guardians in certain cases to pay the school fees of poor children. Sandon, in charge of the Bill, recommended the withdrawal of the amendment, but subsequently Northcote, amid cheers from the Tories and cries of astonishment from the Liberals, accepted it. Then began a struggle which lasted till half-past four in the morning. At eleven o'clock Northcote made this amazing departure, and the Opposition began the game of moving the alternate resolutions for adjournment. Four hours later, Dilke, looking as rosy as if he had just come out of his morning bath, assured the Chancellor of the Exchequer that if he were agreeable the game might go on indefinitely, there being plenty of men to move the alternate motions, and that when each had taken his turn the House could divide again on every successive word of Robert Montague's somewhat lengthy amendment.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer was yet firm, and still the ranks behind him hurled defiance at the relentless foe. Then Whitwell rose, and with him a mighty shout from both sides. There was a general consonance of opinion that the member for Kendal was not the sort of man who ought to be out till such hours of the morning. It was all very well for young sparks like J. G. Hubbard and Wm. McArthur to be nodding and winking and boisterously cheering when the gas was put out in the House of Commons because the morning sun was shining through the windows. But Whitwell ought to be in bed, and the House had no hesitation in expressing its decided opinion on that point. In vain he smiled sweetly upon the turbulent throng. Equally ineffectual his sterner mood, when he squared his shoulders, furrowed his brows, and wrestled furiously with the contents of his trousers-pockets. The House would not hear him; and after standing thus for the space of ten minutes, and nearly ruining a new though roomy pair of pants, he sat down.

Last of all came George Balfour, commissioned by Adam to move the next amendment. This was a great occasion for the gallant Major-General. His parliamentary career had not hitherto been a happy one. Flouted by his own side when he has expressed his desire to take part in the debates, laughed at by the other side when he has himself made occasion to interpose,

and regarded from all sides as a member from the sound of whose voice mankind instinctively flee, Sir George recognised that at last his hour of triumph had come. Hastily winding himself up to go for an hour and a half, he rose, and in tones whose plaintive solemnity arrested the attention of the House, began :

"Mr. Speaker, the time has now come when it falls to my lot to bear my part in this historic debate. It is an occa—"

Alas that the shameful story should have to be told ! A storm of laughter suddenly fell upon the orator, flashing round his astonished head, surging about his trembling legs, hopelessly drowning his melancholy voice, and casting upon the Speaker the responsibility of supposing, in the absence of direct evidence, that he had concluded by moving the adjournment of the House.

The fun was growing in intensity, but it was also getting a trifle wearisome for hard-worked Ministers no longer in their teens. There was no help for it, so the Chancellor of the Exchequer agreed to the adjournment, and the graceless Opposition gave a yelp of delight at having won the day.

Aug. 9.—Mr. Disraeli's rejuvenescence.

There is current a pretty saying of Earl Russell's about Disraeli. Somebody observed to the "gal-lant old gentleman," whose absence from the leadership of affairs P. A. Taylor just now deplored, that the Premier was failing—that he displayed a curious indifference to the course of events, and was by no means to be brought to the point of decision as to what Bills in the Government programme were to be pushed forward and which allowed to fall in the rear.

"Ah !" said Earl Russell, with a pitying shake of the head, and a complacent glance at his own legs, "Disraeli is getting very old."

It is true that Disraeli is only thirteen years younger than Earl Russell. But statesmen are notoriously long-lived, witness among living contemporaries Thiers, Gortschakoff, Russell, and J. G. Hubbard ; and though Disraeli is no chicken, it would not be safe to regard him as a played-out patriarch. Moreover, the remark is inopportune, because Disraeli has within the past few weeks developed a rejuvenition which is little short of a miracle. Just before the Whitsuntide recess he was so ill that the gravest apprehensions arose amongst his friends. With his

usual pluck he came down to the House at question-time, and crawling to the Treasury bench threw himself into his seat, where he reclined for an hour or so with haggard eyes and sallow cheeks, indrawn and corpse-like. After a while he was obliged even to forego this show of sprightliness, and for three or four days his familiar presence was missed from the House. Upon his return he rapidly grew well again, and it is a long time since he looked so well as during the past six weeks. With the recovery of his health came back also his happy adroitness in managing the House in little things, and his personal ascendancy has increased in proportion.

CHAPTER XIII.

DISRAELI NO MORE !

The Major's departure—The last of Mr. Disraeli, M.P.—Sir Stafford Northcote—Mr. Gathorne Hardy's disappointment—Mr. Disraeli's young men—Ex-Ministers—Successes of the Session.

Aug. 11. — The Major's departure. The Major has gone, and there is room for an additional couple of members on the back seat below the gangway. He has been welcomed in the country that has much reason to be proud of him with the sound of harp, sackbut, and psaltery, and with the lilting verse of the national song-writer :

“ Of all the M.P.s
That Parliament sees
From session to session, I'll wager
Neither Saxon nor Scot
Can pretend that they've got
A member to match The Major.
Our portly and ponderous Major,
Our mighty magnificent Major—
The councils of State
Have no man of such weight,
Or such girth, as our bowld Irish Major.”

Thus the song-writer ; and whilst acknowledging the accuracy of this personal description, one is glad to note by the next verse

that a due sense of the Major's position in the House is beginning to manifest itself in Ireland :

“ When he rises, the House
Is as mute as a mouse,
They know he's no foolish rampager—
But soon the “Hear, Hears,”
And the thundering cheers,
Are brought out by the speech of The Major.
By the powerful speech of The Major—
The roof-shaking speech of The Major—
Be it early or late
The members will wait
To hear a broadside from The Major.”

There was a time not far distant when it was the custom in some Irish newspapers to speak of the Major as a buffoon, and to talk of the character of Irish parliamentary representation suffering at his hands. Nothing could be remoter from the truth than this impression. The Major has nothing of the buffoon about him, and if it were possible to take him as an average specimen of the culture and breeding of the Irish member it would be a happy thing for Ireland. He is a gentleman, even of courtly bearing, who has had the benefits of a classical education and the company at the mess-table of one of her Majesty's most distinguished regiments. So far from being a buffoon, he is terribly in earnest, and it is this earnestness which boils and bubbles over—catching up his ideas as they issue from the brain and casting them into a caldron whence they are poured out before the House a seething and incongruous mass—that makes him one of the most irresistible speakers that ever addressed the House of Commons.

That in cooler moments he is capable of marshalling his ideas and arguments in a fair train was shown by his speech on moving the second reading of the Municipal Franchise (Ireland) Bill. That he has a keen and ready wit, quite apart from the quality of unconscious humour, is proved by a little incident that happened a short time ago. One of his constituents, being fully possessed by the conviction that the Major, having got into Parliament, had only to ask in order that the Government should give, cast a longing eye upon a local postmastership—let us say at Ballymahooly—that had fallen vacant, and wrote to the Major to secure the reversion of the office. The Major replied in a letter that would have looked exceedingly well in the local paper. Whilst

protesting his great anxiety to serve so respected a man as Mr. Tim Doolan, he declared that he never would stoop to accept a favour at the hands of a Saxon Government.

"Never shall it be said," so the letter concluded, "that by favours done, the English Government had a hold on yours truly, Purcell O'Gorman."

The Irish patriot in Waterford was, however, not able at the moment to see matters through this fine atmosphere of sentimentality. It is all very well to condemn "Castle influence" when it is exercised in behoof of your neighbour, and to denounce with shrieks, and if necessary with shillelaghs, any man who might be suspected of having taken a bribe from the Government. But when you want a post-office for yourself, it is quite another pair of sleeves. So Tim Doolan thought, and he wrote again, urging the hon. and gallant member to use his influence in high quarters to secure the desired office. The Major answered with grave dignity, repeating his objections; whereupon Tim, uttering an epistolary "Whirroo!" came down upon his parliamentary representative with some strong language, in the course of which he reiterated his belief that the Major had only to write a line and the thing would be done.

On receipt of this the Major sat down and wrote the following epistle:—

"House of Commons.

"Sir,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 5th inst., in which you state that I have 'only to write a line' in order that you should obtain the appointment you desire. I have therefore much pleasure in hereby appointing you Postmaster of Ballymahooly.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"Tim Doolan, Esq., Waterford."

"PURCELL O'GORMAN.

And the Major has never heard from him since.

Aug. 12. — The
last of Mr. Dis-
raeli, M.P.

Once more the revolving seasons have brought round the time when the House of Commons is voiceless, and in the gloomy chamber the Speaker's chair, swathed in unbleached calico, looms through the mist of the quickly-closing autumn nights like a ghost whose unsubstantial liver is touched with spiritual jaundice. Once more we have seen the select throng of members crowd in single file between the Treasury bench and the table, ambitious to mark the close of a useful Session by shaking hands with the Speaker. Once more,

and for the last time this Session, the "Who goes home?" of cheery Mr. Hartley has rung through the resounding lobby, and there has been no answer save the shuffling of the rapidly-departing feet.

Of most who have thus departed we shall see their faces once again in the coming year. But one has gone forth who never will return. Little did I think, when I somewhat impatiently listened on Friday week to Disraeli winding up the debate on the Turkish iniquities in Bulgaria, that this was the last speech he would make in the House of Commons. Forty years has Disraeli dwelt in this wilderness of talk; and now his voice is for ever hushed as far as we may listen, and we shall see his face no more. It is a pity for his fame, though it may be a just retribution for his faults, that his last recorded speech in the House should have been such a poor one. It was occasioned by a blunder, the outcome of the weak side of his political character, and it was marked by all those littlenesses of composition and manner that mar his speeches. Not being of a grand nature he would probably have failed had he taken leave of the House in a set speech, such as that in which Sir Robert Peel announced his retirement from office. To do that well a man must be of a genuine nature, and capable of unaffected speech. Disraeli, charged with such a mission, would certainly have soared on the wings of magniloquent phraseology into the empyrean heights of sentiment, and might have brought tears into the eyes of John Manners. But he would not have touched the heart of men as Gladstone or Bright would under similar circumstances. We can well have dispensed with a set oration, but it would have been a happier dispensation of events if Disraeli might have gone out amid an accidental pyrotechnic display of epigram and banter.

The actual speech, when the writer of history comes to study it as throwing a light on the character of this remarkable man, will satisfy Justice, as it marks the level reached by Disraeli when he has had to grapple with the serious side of political events. But no one would have grudged the effect that would have been gained if, in recurring to "Disraeli's last speech in the House of Commons," the student of history had found a finished specimen of the skilful fence, the light satire, or even of the crushing invective with which the Premier in these later years

has charmed the House of Commons. What he will actually find is so many words full of sound and fury signifying nothing—except that the Premier had by reckless dealings with facts been led into a hole, and that, lacking the largeness of nature which prompts a man who has made a mistake frankly to acknowledge it, he had for half an hour condescended to quibble in order to prove that he was standing on level ground, and that the person in the hole was Forster.

Though little more than a week has elapsed since his voluntary act of political stultification was made known, men's minds have already adjusted themselves to the altered state of things, and pictures of the House of Commons without Disraeli are familiar enough on the retina of the mental vision. Stafford Northcote will naturally occupy, though he may not fill, Disraeli's place, and the House will only become so many degrees the more commonplace and humdrum. At first sight this change may appear a personal advantage for Hartington as removing from the scene a renowned opponent. But in some respects it will be found that the noble Marquis will be a serious loser by the new order of things. In times past it has been a relief, refreshing to the honest soul, to turn from Disraeli with his hollowness, his disingenuousness, and his artificiality of all kinds, to the simple solidity, the manly straightforwardness, of Hartington. In this respect the point of contrast will be removed, for Stafford Northcote is only a degree less straightforward and honest than the Leader of the Opposition.

The degree is marked at this point—that whilst Hartington will positively go out of his way to tell a damaging truth, and is absolutely incapable of existing within arm's length of a possible misapprehension which if left unshattered might tend to his advantage or to that of his party, Stafford Northcote has been so long trained in diplomatic usages that he might not so regard his duty. To illustrate precisely what is meant, I should say that whilst Stafford Northcote was able early in the Session to make a statement about Egypt which, without precisely affirming anything, conveyed to the public mind the impression that the financial prospects of that country were in a favourable condition, Hartington would have been wholly incapable of making such a speech. Yet not the slightest slur rests upon the character of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the matter.

Sir Stafford Northcote. As a leader of the House of Commons, Stafford Northcote will certainly prove himself eminently respectable, and may even be more. He fails in one essential quality, and the House will miss the light hand on the rein which often guided it safely over spongy morasses and by the verge of dizzy precipices. For twenty years, with the interval of Gladstone's supremacy, the House of Commons has been accustomed to be won over by a joke, or to be soothed by an epigram. Gladstone lacked the sixth, and not least precious, sense of humour, and often slaughtered the foe with a battering-ram, where Disraeli or Palmerston would have cheerily tickled him to death with an oiled feather.

Stafford Northcote is head and shoulders less in mental stature than Gladstone, and is distinctly more dark on this side of humour than his old master. In truth, when I call to mind Gladstone's occasional midnight encounters with Cavendish Bentinck, before that distinguished statesman became one of Her Majesty's Ministers, and when I reflect upon his demolition of Harcourt in the first Session of the new Parliament, when that versatile politician had turned upon his former chief, and presumed to lecture him from a position actually occupied by his favour, I begin to suspect that the truer estimate of Gladstone's character would be that his quality of humour and his power of sarcasm are crushed under the weight of his logical and argumentative apparatus. Life to him is a very serious thing, and he has not often time to use the lighter artillery with which some lesser men prevail in the battle.

Stafford Northcote not only shows this same contempt for the potent arts of raillery and banter, but is wholly incapable of exercising them. He is a sound, safe man, of matured judgment, constitutional caution, generous sympathies, perfect uprightness, and a wholesome horror of anything savouring of Toryism. He has of late developed much skill and aptitude for debate, and has greatly improved in his actual style of speaking. When a man at the age of fifty-eight, who has been twenty-one years in the House of Commons, suddenly begins to improve, there is no saying what point of excellence he may not reach. Palmerston, the most successful leader the House of Commons ever had, is a striking instance of the luxuriant growth possible of attainment to plants that late in life discover

a capacity for flowering in fresh places. Palmerston was seventy-one when he assumed the leadership of the House, and he astonished everybody by the finished ease and supreme skill with which he guided the restive force committed to his care. Stafford Northcote succeeds to the reversion of the office with thirteen precious years in hand as compared with Palmerston, and who knows what nascent qualities he may not be possessed of? He has distinctly improved at an age and under circumstances when most men's faculties are fully developed, and their mental habits irrevocably fixed. He may go on improving in the warm sun of prosperity till he combines the *bonhomie* of Palmerston with the eloquence of Gladstone and the dexterity of Disraeli.

In the meanwhile what will probably happen for the next few years is that the tune of the House of Commons will be pitched by the keynote of a man of respectable talents, business habits, and common-sense views, who will never disappoint the expectations formed of him, and will occasionally surprise the world by going beyond them.

Mr. Gathorne Hardy's disappointment. The prominence quietly and skilfully conferred by Disraeli upon Stafford Northcote through the full length of the Session has had the effect of dwarfing the proportions of his colleagues in the Ministry. This has notably been the case with Gathorne Hardy, who has with ill-concealed chagrin seen a high office, the reversion of which at one time seemed his beyond dispute, hopelessly slipping out of his grasp. He has accepted the disposition of events in haughty silence, and the only hint of the real state of affairs which the House of Commons has received has been found in the observation of his studious avoidance of conversation either with Disraeli or Stafford Northcote, his general abstention from participation in debate not directly affecting his own department, and his ostentatious withdrawal to the lower end of the Treasury bench. But what Hardy has done in the House during the Session has been well done, and his skill as a debater was triumphantly and strikingly manifested when unexpectedly called up in the debate on O'Connor Power's proposal to release the Fenian prisoners. He utterly demolished Bright, and the fact that the great orator had, by a surprisingly

foolish speech, laid himself open to the attack, ought not to detract from the praise due for the skill and force by which the overthrow was made complete.

Mr. Disraeli's young men. Ward Hunt has slept a good deal during the Session, and has to that extent been absolutely safe, whilst in his waking hours a conviction that his natural tendency towards bluster must be curbed if he is to retain so comfortable a lounge as the Treasury bench has not been without wholesome effect. Sandon may perhaps claim the crown of merit amongst occupants of the Treasury bench, having by the exercise of great skill and marvellous patience carried in the teeth of a stormy Opposition the principal measure of the Session, making it unexpectedly favourable to the views of his own party—which, as critics from the Liberal side are too apt to forget, is the aim and the duty of a party Minister. Hicks-Beach has preserved his well-earned character as the most successful Irish Secretary of recent date, his inexhaustible patience and courtesy having stood the proof of a third Session during which it has suffered the daily assaults of Irishmen in and out of Parliament. Another illustration of conspicuous success in office is furnished by reflection on the career of W. H. Smith, whose business-like management of his special department, resulting in a considerable saving to the national purse, has been publicly acknowledged, not only by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but by gentlemen on the front bench opposite. The office of Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury is admirable training for higher posts, and Smith has paved the way for a promotion which cannot be long delayed, and which, when it comes, will be satisfactory on both sides of the House. Adderley having confirmed the opinion of him as minister, to which people greatly esteeming the man were last Session reluctantly driven, is, rumour goes, to be made a peer—a fact which, if confirmed, would render supererogatory remarks on the so-called “elevation” of Disraeli. John Manners has gracefully and amiably ambled through the Session, and would also make an excellent peer.

Du reste, George Hamilton is young, and India large. Cross, who to-morrow night will be sleeping under the same roof as his Sovereign at Holyrood, looks back with complacency upon a

Session throughout which he has on the whole been well satisfied with himself. Selater-Booth has passed an innocuous Pollution of Rivers Bill. The Lord Advocate, contrary to reasonable expectation, has carried north his scalp, the removal of which was seriously threatened by George Campbell and the general body of slighted Scotch members. That cheery old salt, James Elphinstone, is laid up with the gout, and the Treasury bench has during the latter part of the Session much missed the humanising influence of his presence. Selwin-Ibbetson has been allowed to speak for the Government at least twice on dreary Wednesday afternoons; and the Right Hon. Cavendish-Bentinck, Judge-Advocate-General, has preserved throughout the Session a judicious silence.

Ex-Ministers. Of ex-Ministers there are only two exceptions to a distinct decline of personal influence as a net result of the Session. Gladstone is as great a power as he has been on any day since the 17th February, 1874, and by more than one speech during the Session has maintained his old pre-eminence as a parliamentary orator. The other exception is Hartington, and here the statement of the difference may be carried farther; for the Leader of the Opposition has not only held his own, but has made long strides towards the acquirement of a stronger position. As a speaker he has vastly improved, having finally abandoned the idea that because he held a responsible position he must needs stretch the expression of his views on the framework of a long speech. He now rarely speaks for more than twenty minutes—that golden mean of time beyond which no man, from the Premier downwards, needs stray twice in a Session—and frequently he has been briefer. Not only as a debater, ready in due season to throw the light of common sense and high principle on the waters of debate stirred by pragmatic pretenders or subtle schismatics, but as a statesman of sound judgment and true political instinct, Hartington is rapidly making real a position of predominance which when first conceded was purely nominal.

Successes of the Session. Amongst private members the chief prize of the Session belongs to Joseph Cowen, an award made by universal consent, and surprising to no one save the

member for Newcastle, who cannot conceive how people should attach so much importance to what he says or does. Cowen's speech on the third reading of the Royal Titles Bill was one of the most remarkable and genuine successes achieved in an assembly not unaccustomed to surprises of that kind. Subsequent though rare interpositions—as, for example, that on the Amnesty debate the other week—proved that this outburst of eloquence was not a mere flash in the pan. Nature has gifted Cowen with the endowment of a simple eloquence which if it stood alone would move a multitude. But when he speaks in the House of Commons he addresses an assembly every man in which is more or less intimately acquainted with his genuine character, in which enthusiastic chivalry and world-embracing loving-kindness are balanced by the action of a keen intellect, a rich fund of practical common sense, and a wide and close acquaintance with men and books.

Cowen's advances towards the front have been by leaps and bounds. Dilke's progress has been more deliberate, but not less certain. The member for Chelsea, who six years ago used to be howled at by alarmed Tories who saw on his broad forehead the mark of the Beast, is now one of the most acceptable speakers in the House, a position gained without sacrificing any of his principles or withdrawing a foot from his position at the outposts of Liberalism. In some respects the House has advanced towards him; in others, relating to larger knowledge and the wisdom gained by travel and intercourse with the master-minds of both hemispheres, Dilke has advanced towards the House of Commons. However effected, the union is complete, and is likely to prove lasting.

SESSION 1877.

CHAPTER XIV.

EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.

Benjamin, Earl of Beaconsfield—Mr. Delahunty—Mr. Chamberlain's first speech—Terrier and mastiff—Mr. Gibson takes his seat—The Earl of Beaconsfield's first speech.

Feb. 8.—Benjamin, Earl of Beaconsfield.

IN the House of Lords a brilliant assembly was gathered before one o'clock, albeit the ceremony at which they had come to assist would not take place till two. The arrangements in the House were similar to those observed last year. Noble lords had chivalrously abandoned to the ladies every part of the floor, save the front row of benches on either side. The sitting accommodation was increased by the addition of a number of benches clustered about the cross-benches where the princes who are also peers of Parliament usually sit. All the backs were taken off the benches, an arrangement which, apparently at least, gave a fuller measure of room. Over the throne were spread the robes of State, the long sweeping ermine cloak with just the edge of purple and gold shown as the folds crossed. The wooll-sack was in its usual place, but before it, corresponding with the cluster of seats at the farther end, were a number of backless benches.

The bishops had abandoned their seats for the accommodation of the Foreign Ministers, and shared with the judges these benches before the wooll-sack. There were not so many bishops nor so many judges as last year, a notable absence among the latter being the Lord Chief Justice, who was prevented by illness from attending. Lord Chief Baron Kelly, however, was present, and conversed freely with his learned brethren.

Amid the crowd of peers who by half-past one o'clock filled the benches, there were not many whose names are familiar as

legislators. Lord Hampton was early in his place, and was soon in conversation with the bishops. The Duke of Richmond and Gordon, by exception among the Peers, appeared in military uniform. Lord Gordon, better known as the Scotch Lord Advocate, seized an unexpectedly early opportunity of taking his seat as a Peer, finding a place among the crowd near the cross benches.

The Foreign Ministers, who are always, excepting the ladies, amongst the earliest arrivals on these occasions, formed a glittering mass of colour to the right of the woolsack. First among them entered the members of the Chinese Legation, in round high caps and petticoats, looking as if they had just stepped off the panel of a tea-chest. They were appointed a place on the fourth bench, where they sat and watched the varying episodes of the ceremony with the keenest interest. In the front row of diplomatists the form of Count Münster towered head and shoulders above his fellows, of whom Count Schouvaloff, the Count Menebrea, and the Count De Cassa Leglesia early became his companions. The Japanese and the Persian Ministers occupied seats on the second row, in which Mr. Pierrepont, the American Minister, sat conspicuous by the absolute plainness of his dress. In all the crowded assembly he was the only man who did not wear uniform, or display a jewelled order.

Count Beust was late in arrival; and last of all, when there seemed to be some truth in the rumour that he was not coming, entered Musurus Pacha. His Excellency greeted with marked cordiality the representatives of the great Powers, and was himself welcomed with most cheerful politeness. He sat next to Count Münster, and entered into earnest conversation with him.

At ten minutes to two the Lord Chancellor, preceded by the Mace, entered and took his seat on the woolsack, in exceedingly close quarters with learned judges and the lords spiritual, who were massed on the cross benches before him. About a quarter of an hour later his lordship received a signal, upon which he left the House, and everybody knew that Royalty was coming.

With a swift rustling sound, the ladies, who had hitherto sat with opera-cloaks covering their shoulders, began with one accord to throw them off, and rose to their feet as the Prince of Wales entered leading the Princess. His Royal Highness wore

the robes of a peer, with no other difference save that the always odd-looking garment was tied at the throat with white silk ribbon. Quitting the side of the Princess, he took a seat in the chair to the right of the throne, whilst the Princess partially seated herself on the uncomfortably high woolsack, with her face towards the throne, and her back to the throng.

Hardly had the noble lords and ladies reseated themselves after receiving the Prince and Princess, than the sound of far-off trumpets announced the arrival of the Queen. Preceding Her Majesty on entering the hall came the Pursuivant and Heralds clad in gorgeous cloth of gold. Their position was at the left-hand side of the throne, but to reach it was a matter that took up some time, owing to the necessity of passing between the Prince and Princess of Wales, and skirting the foot-steps of the throne, to each of whom and to which it was necessary that all should bow in succession. The admiration of the skill with which this difficult performance was carried out somewhat distracted attention. On looking again to the door on the right of the throne by which the procession slowly entered, there appeared a familiar face, but a strangely disguised figure. It was hard to think that the personage in the red cloak tipped with ermine, who bore aloft a jewelled scabbard, was Benjamin, Earl of Beaconsfield. Passing between the Prince and Princess of Wales, and taking note of neither, the new peer took up his position on the left of the throne.

The Queen, following, stopped to shake hands cordially with the Prince of Wales. After this greeting, Her Majesty advanced to the steps of the throne and seated herself, whilst the Princess Louise, who had followed in company with the Princess Beatrice, advanced and threw the ermine robe partly across Her Majesty's feet. The Marquis of Winchester followed the Queen bearing the Cap of Maintenance, whilst the Lord Chancellor took up his position on the right of the Prince of Wales, the Princess of Wales sitting alone on the woolsack.

At a signal from the Queen the lords and ladies, who had been standing, resumed their seats, and the messenger was despatched to summon the faithful Commons. A long pause followed, during which Lord Beaconsfield stood motionless by the side of the Queen unfalteringly bearing aloft the sword, and with no more expression on his face than he has been accustomed

to show in the House of Commons when Gladstone, or some other gentleman on the benches opposite, has been denouncing his policy or confuting his arguments.

The silence was presently broken by a confused murmur, and the tread of many feet; and in a few moments there appeared, walking in something of decorous and dignified order, the Speaker, preceded by the Mace, and accompanied by the Chaplain. But after him the deluge, on the topmost wave of which appeared the Home Secretary, making vigorous but futile efforts, gallantly seconded by Childers, to keep back the surging crowd behind. When members got close up to the bar, Stafford Northcote was by some means delivered from the centre of the crowd, and was passed up, taking his position in the front near the Speaker.

The Speaker being in his place, the Lord Chancellor advanced to the steps of the throne, and, on bended knee, proffered the Queen's Speech to Her Majesty, which she, by a slight gesture, declined to receive, and the Lord Chancellor, accepting this as an instruction to read it, bowed low and turned to face the House. But he had to wait for some moments whilst the turmoil consequent upon the arrival of visitors from the other House was subsiding, and even after he had commenced to read there was a tramping of feet outside, where members who had unfortunately drifted to the rear stood at the doors like the Peri at the gates of Paradise.

The Lord Chancellor read the speech in an audible and deliberate tone, making it quite an easy matter for foreign Ministers to follow, as they did with much interest, the passage relating to foreign affairs. The Speech concluded, Her Majesty rose, and descending the steps of the throne, kissed the cheek of the Princess of Wales, and as she passed out gave her hand to the Prince, who kissed it. The whole of the ceremony, as far as the Queen was concerned, did not occupy more than fifteen minutes, and upon Her Majesty's departure the crowded benches were emptied.

The House, however, did not remain long in an empty state. It would appear that half of the many ladies who attended the Royal celebration in evening dress had not done more than go home to change their dress. Shortly after four they began to reappear, now in morning dress. They took up their seats in

the gallery running round the hall, so far crowding it that even the turret over the throne was occupied. The floor of the House was crowded ; and when, shortly after half-past four, the Lord Chancellor took his seat on the woolsack, the House of Lords presented an appearance such as has seldom been witnessed during the present reign.

The attraction evidently was the ceremony of Lord Beaconsfield taking the oaths, and this took place without much delay. At twenty minutes to five the Premier appeared on the threshold, clad in peer's robes, the other lords, except the new peer's sponsors, being in the ordinary morning dress in which they are accustomed to attend to the affairs of the nation. Lord Beaconsfield entered preceded by the Deputy Black Rod, the Garter King-at-Arms, and the Earl Marshal, who led him within the railings. Here the Earl of Derby appeared, and, in company with the Earl of Bradford, presented Lord Beaconsfield to the Lord Chancellor. Then the new peer approached the table, and handed the clerk his writ of summons as Earl of Beaconsfield and Viscount Hughenden. This done, accompanied by Earl Bradford and Lord Derby, he walked round to the viscounts' bench, on which the three seated themselves, and gravely saluted the Chancellor by thrice raising their three-cornered hats, which they put on as they sat down. The Lord Chancellor, also wearing his hat, raised it in acknowledgment of the salute. Next the three lords proceeded to the earls' bench, on which they again seated themselves and bowed to the Lord Chancellor, this time with their three-cornered hats in their hands.

Finally Lord Beaconsfield walked out of the House, and, returning in ten minutes, divested of his cumbrous cloak, took up his seat on the Ministerial bench, occupying the place hitherto appropriated by the Lord President of the Council, and having on his left hand Lord Derby and on his right the Duke of Richmond. There was some cheering on his entrance, but nothing like such a welcome as was accorded to the Marquis of Salisbury when, a quarter of an hour later, he entered and took his usual place on the Ministerial bench. The cheers which greeted the noble marquis came pretty equally from both sides of the House, and expressed the general congratulations upon his recovery from recent illness.

The interest of the evening was somewhat distractedly divided between the House of Lords and the House of Commons, and it must be admitted that the former prevailed. The House of Commons was well filled when the Speaker took the chair, notwithstanding the absence of many of the members, who crowded the avenues of the House of Lords. All the Ministers having seats in the Lower House were early in their places, Stafford Northcote on entering being received with slight cheers. Hartington, Gladstone, and Lowe formed part of the ex-Ministers who crowded the front Opposition bench, the only leading member of the late Government absent being Bright.

Feb. 16.—Mr. De- Delahunty, who had quite an enthusiastic recep-
lahunty. tion when he took his seat on Monday, is already perfectly and cheerfully at home in the House. He has been about a good deal this afternoon, eating buns in the lobby and shaking hands with everybody in the House. I understand that he is convinced as strongly as ever that the salvation of Ireland is bound up in one-pound notes, and that he will on an early day, possibly *apropos* of the Eastern Question, take an opportunity of setting forth his views.

Feb. 17. — Mr. It would be interesting to know exactly what
Chamberlain's impression Walter Barttelot formed of Chamber-
first speech. lain's probable appearance and manner before he had the pleasure of meeting him face to face in the House of Commons. He had evidently evolved some fancy picture, for his surprise to-night at seeing the junior member for Birmingham in a coat, and even a waistcoat, and on hearing him speak very good English in a quiet undemonstrative manner, was undisguised. It is reported that Sir Walter expected that this fearsome Radical would enter the House making "a cart-wheel" down the floor, like ragged little boys do adown the pavement when a drag or an omnibus passes. The good Baronet's acquaintance with the forms of the House convinced him that there would be no use in Chamberlain's presenting himself in his shirtsleeves and with a short clay pipe in his mouth. But on the score of waistcoats there is no Standing Order, and the Radical might, if he pleased, have paid the necessary homage to respectability by buttoning his coat across

his chest, whilst he gratified his natural instincts by dispensing with the superfluity of a waistcoat.

When, therefore, there uprose from a bench below the gangway opposite a slightly-made, youthful, almost boyish-looking man, with a black coat fearlessly unbuttoned to display the waistcoat and disclose the shirt-collar and necktie, Sir Walter began to stare and to cast side-glances at that other great legislator, Colonel Corbett, in the startled endeavour to "know what he thought of *this*?" Moreover, the Radical wore, not spectacles with tin or brass rims as Felix Holt would inevitably have done had his sight been impaired, but—an eyeglass! Positively an eyeglass, and, as far as one might judge looking across the House, an eyeglass framed in precisely the same style as that which Colonel Corbett himself wears when his good-humoured face is turned towards a distant object. Surprise deepened when the Radical in a low, clear, and admirably pitched voice, and with a manner self-possessed without being self-assertive, proceeded to discuss the Prisons Bill, opposing it on the very lines which Sir Walter himself had made his *Torres Vedras* when he besieged the Bill last Session.

This was very remarkable; but there was only one thing for an English gentleman to do, and that Sir Walter promptly did. He rose when Chamberlain sat down, and, awkwardly conscious of disguising his cart-wheel and no-waistcoat theory, publicly abandoned it, and held out over the heads of Henley and Beresford Hope the right hand of fellowship to the Radical member for Birmingham.

It was an affecting scene, and beholding it, one forgot the comic element and the hidden similitude to the graciously condescending reception by a Mandarin of a barbarian from London or Paris whom he has discovered does not go about with his head under his arm, nor lunch off the broiled bones of his neighbours' children. When, sixty years ago, Lord Amherst visited Peking as an Ambassador, the "Brother of the Moon" then reigning sent him back to the Prince Regent with the following laconic epistle: "I have sent thine ambassadors back to their own country without punishing them for the high crime they have committed." Barttelot was even kinder in his treatment of the barbarian from the Black Country.

"If the Hon. Member for Birmingham," he said just now,

"will always address the House with the same quietness, and the same intelligence displayed on this occasion, I can assure him the House of Commons will always be ready to listen to him."

Feb. 18. — Ter-
rier and mas-
sif.

At five o'clock, when Gladstone rose to call attention to the despatch addressed by Lord Derby to Sir Henry Elliot on the 5th of September, 1876, the House was crowded. Every seat on the floor had been early secured, and members congregated in double row in the gallery facing the front Opposition bench. The Strangers' Gallery and the Speaker's Gallery were alike filled, and the portion of the latter appropriated for the use of Peers was crowded. Before commencing his speech, Gladstone gave notice that he would on an early day call attention to the despatch of Sir H. Elliot, dated the 18th December, and ask who were the important personages "who, the Ambassador had stated, had declared that the Turk must be driven out of Europe."

The loud laughter which his emphatic reading of this question had given rise to subsiding, he proceeded to address himself to his subject. After some preliminary criticisms of the negotiations in Constantinople, amid which he found there were under-currents continually counteracting the representations of the Government as set forth in the despatches now published, he protested against the theory advanced in the particular despatch under consideration, that England had been, would be, or, he might say, could be placed in the humiliating circumstance of not being able to perform her treaty engagements. What these treaty engagements were he inquired at some length; and after discussing the Tripartite Treaty, he arrived at the conclusion that the treaty in question must be the Treaty of March, 1856. He showed with some elaboration that when in 1871 the Government of which he was the head had been a party to the revision of the Treaty of Paris, they were, owing to the existence of war between France and Germany, deprived of any "leverage for raising the whole question of the interior affairs of Turkey." He therefore held that the late Administration were free from the reproach of accusing the Government of neglecting a question which they had themselves omitted to deal with. He concluded a speech of nearly an hour's

duration by asking Ministers definitively to state whether they still found themselves bound, after all that had happened in Turkey, by the engagements of the Treaty of 1856.

Hardy emphatically answered that the Government did so regard their duty, and went on to state, amid loud cheers from the Ministerialists, that it had been proclaimed at the Conference, and he again proclaimed it, that England would be wrong in every sense of the word if she were to endeavour to employ material coercion against Turkey. That at least was the present view of the Government, but he declined to look into the future and say what might happen under different circumstances.

After some talk, Chaplin, in a speech of unusual acrimony, addressed directly to Gladstone, and pointed by frequent gestures towards him, laid at his door the whole responsibility of the European crisis. Cheered by members around him, Chaplin presently reached a climax at which he told Gladstone that as a man of honour there was only one course open to him.

Hereupon Gladstone rose to his feet, Colonel Muir rising at the same moment. The gallant colonel hotly appealed to the Speaker to know how far these personalities were to be borne, and Gladstone quietly observed that he also had risen to know whether he was to be instructed by an hon. member in what was the only course he might take as a man of honour. The Speaker ruling that Chaplin was out of order, that gentleman withdrew the expression; but the temper of the House now being thoroughly aroused, and cheers and counter-cheers ringing through the hall, Chaplin, with some warmth, undertook now, or at any more convenient time, to give Gladstone an opportunity of defending himself. Cries of "Move! move!" came from various parts of the House, and Chaplin moved the adjournment of the House.

"I beg to second the motion," Gladstone said, approaching the table; but it was several moments before he could proceed further, loud bursts of cheering greeting him from the now crowded benches on the Opposition side.

At the outset he spoke with evident emotion; but as he went on he became able to take a less serious view of the incident, and, in a tone of keen irony, bantered Chaplin, who did not join in the general laughter, but sat with folded arms and frowning face.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer suggested that the discussion having grown unexpectedly warm, it would be better to close it, especially as there was no issue before the House. He begged the leaders of the Opposition to make up their minds as to placing some definite resolution before the House, and he undertook that the challenge would be cheerfully taken up, and a full opportunity found for settling the issue. Hartington called attention to the fact that the question before the House was a motion for the adjournment of the debate, and he thought it had better be accepted. This led to a conversation, in the course of which Elcho, echoing an observation frequently made on the Conservative side, urged the Opposition to "bring the question to the test of a vote," which A. M. Sullivan said was precisely what the Opposition would not do. What the Ministers wanted, he added, amid cheers from the Opposition, was not discussion but division. At twenty minutes to one in the morning the debate was adjourned.

Feb. 19.—Mr. Gibson, the newly-appointed Attorney-General for Ireland, took his seat on the Treasury Bench to-night, beaming with happiness, and in charge of the Irish Judicature Bill. The Government are fortunate in obtaining the services of a man like Gibson in exchange for those of Plunket. As Charles Lewis said, standing just now behind the Treasury Bench, and almost laying one hand on the head of the new Attorney-General and another on that of the late Solicitor-General, the appointment of Gibson tempers the general regret felt at the loss of Plunket. The new Attorney-General has been in Parliament only for two Sessions, and his advancement might be regarded as unduly rapid. But in truth, though Gibson is glad enough to accept office, the balance of obligation is on the part of the Government. He is an excellent lawyer, was born in Ireland, has a mellifluous voice just softened by the real Dublin brogue, speaks fluently, is conciliatory in manner, popular with his countrymen, acceptable to the House, and though only forty years of age Nature has paid him, in the sight of all men, the subtle compliment of dowering him with a wealth of snow-white hair, an outward and visible sign of matured experience and dearly-bought wisdom for which most men have to wait till their strength be labour and sorrow.

If Gibson has a fault it is a tendency to overlay his argument with words. He has hitherto rarely spoken under three-quarters of an hour, and has shown no scruple about filling up the round sixty minutes. Possibly this fatal failing arose from over-anxiety and a consciousness that he was undergoing a state of probation under the eye of Ministers. To-night, having secured the prize which has been dangled before his eyes for a Session and a half, he was judiciously brief, a hopeful sign for the future, and an indication that circumstances have only temporarily obscured his appreciation of that great secret of successful Parliamentary oratory—the limitation of speech within the bounds of twenty minutes.

Feb. 20. — The
Earl of Beaconsfield's first
speech.

It was the House of Lords that was to-night the hub of the Parliamentary universe, and thither flocked the faithful Commons, as if the occasion were the opening of Parliament, and there were opportunity to the fore of a little horseplay in the lobby. It is years since the two Houses were brought so fully into personal contact. Prince Christian, from his place in the centre of the gallery, by the bevy of fair ladies of whom the flower was the Princess of Wales, looked down on a scene of rare and moving interest. Right before him, full in view, was the late Mr. Disraeli, sitting precisely as he used to do in the House of Commons, with legs crossed over knees, arms folded, head hung down, and watchful eyes covertly glancing up and down the Opposition benches.

But what a change in his companions! Instead of Ward Hunt lolling all over the bench, sedately sat the slim and stately Carnarvon. For Stafford Northcote Lord Derby; for Gathorne Hardy the Duke of Richmond; and for the ladylike Lord John Manners, ambling across to his seat as if he were going through a quadrille, strode the black-bearded Salisbury, restless and resistless as the sea off Start Point on a stormy morning.

But though the scene has changed the man remains, and there is marvellously little difference between Mr. Disraeli in the House of Commons and Lord Beaconsfield in the House of Peers. In some respects the difference is to his advantage. In the Commons the space between the Treasury Bench and the

table is so cramped that a speaker has no room for oratorical gestures, save at the risk of upsetting his own glass of water or treading on the toes of his colleagues. In the Lords there is abundant space, too much, perhaps, for an excitable orator like Argyll, whose nationality sometimes asserts itself by the indication of a disposition to tramp up and down as if he were playing the bagpipes. Beaconsfield enjoys this enlargement, and uses it judiciously, skilfully moving from side to side to address himself in turn directly to the various sections of his audience.

One doubt that hung on the skirts of belief in the Premier's success in the Lords was for ever dispelled by his speech to-night. He can make himself heard in this gilded chamber apparently with as much ease, and certainly with as little effort on the part of listeners, as was his wont in the House of Commons. The House of Lords is, by reason of its defective acoustical properties, the grave of much eloquence. It is not only Lyttleton whom no one can hear beyond a radius of three yards. Derby, who when in the House of Commons was heard without an effort on the part of the listener, may be followed in the House of Lords only by painful straining of the attention. To-night portions of many of his sentences were lost before they reached the gallery. Granville, who has displayed much personal concern at the inconvenience, and is fully alive to the particular advantage of being heard in the galleries, was inaudible in his opening sentences, and might be followed only when by manifest effort he fixed his voice, and steadily maintained it, at a certain pitch. Salisbury has a powerful voice, but conveys to the listener the conviction that he is shouting. Beaconsfield spoke apparently as if he were in the House of Commons, and it seemed as if the notorious acoustical failure of the House of Lords were a fable.

This ability to make one's self heard is an incalculable advantage by the possession of which the Bishop of Peterborough has largely profited. There may (or may not) be right Reverend Fathers on the bench who possess the eloquence of Dr. Magee; but of the bevy, he alone is able to dominate the atmosphere of the House of Lords with clear strong voice.

Another doubt connected with Disraeli's career in the House of Lords was also brushed away to-night. How would the

older members of this extremely exclusive club receive "the political adventurer" who had crowned, if not sanctified, his career, by placing on his own head a coronet? Would they sniff at him? Would they, when he joined in the conversation, raise their eyebrows in polite inquiry as to who he might be? and would they draw around them their skirts as he walked through their midst? all which might be easily and effectively accomplished within due Parliamentary limits. If any, when they heard that Benjamin Disraeli was about to bloom into Earl Beaconsfield, thought they would thus comport themselves, they have found abundant reason to change their intention. Mr. Disraeli was never more at ease in the House of Commons than is Lord Beaconsfield in the House of Lords, nor would the personal supremacy of the one personage suffer by comparison with the domination of the other.

The House of Lords is not much given to cheering, and studiously eschews the vulgarity of laughter. "In my mind," wrote a formerly distinguished member of the House in a letter to his son, "there is nothing so ill-bred as audible laughter. A man of parts and fashion is only seen to smile, but never heard to laugh."

Men of parts and fashion, of course, abound in the House of Lords, and it follows that, though the august assembly may occasionally be seen to smile, it is rarely heard to laugh. No peer who has not from early life been tainted with the manner of the House of Commons ever lays himself out to draw a cheer, much less to raise a laugh. Granville from time to time utters polished witticisms or discharges kid-gloved sarcasms, at which noble Lords smile approvingly, with due avoidance of the "disagreeable noise which laughter makes, and that shocking distortion of the face it occasions," against which Lord Chesterfield warned his accomplished son. Hitherto Salisbury has been the only man who could at pleasure cause noble lords to scandalise each other by the sound of voices raised above conversational pitch, or to create mutual horror by that "shocking contortion" of the face by which Supreme Providence has irrevocably stamped its disapproval of the vulgarity of laughter.

But Salisbury, in addition to being of undoubtedly good birth, claims the sympathy of his order by the fact that untoward circumstances threw him, at an impressionable age,

among another class of society. The story goes that when Lord W—— remonstrated with the Duke of R—— for laughing and cheering when Salisbury addressed the House, his Grace drew himself up and said in his most stately manner,

"My lord, I do not cheer or laugh at the Marquis of Salisbury, but at Lord Cranborne, M.P."

Thus Lord Salisbury is suffered; Lord Beaconsfield is accepted. Throughout his speech to-night cheers and laughter followed his sentences with a frequency and a heartiness that might not have been excelled in the House of Commons. The deprecating air with which noble lords are accustomed to endure the presence of any man who so far forgets himself as to make a speech gave way to an attitude of earnest attention. It was not a good speech, and in the House of Commons would have been scouted as insufferably heavy. The Premier waded through a recital of events familiar to every one—at least, in their actual occurrence, and the mental excitement of comparing Disraeli's version of facts with accepted records has long worn itself out. But such as it was the speech was eagerly applauded by noble lords, who laughed even at such commonplace witticisms as that by which Granville's disclaimer of an argument attributed to him was somewhat rudely scorned. It is the latest, but surely not the least triumph of a victorious career that Disraeli should thus have subdued the House of Lords.

CHAPTER XV.

"WHICH LEADER?"

Indiscipline in Opposition—A Cluster of Orators—Mr. Biggar and Mr. Chaplin—Sir Hardinge Giffard sworn in—Mr. Seely—A Deputation to Lord Beaconsfield—McCarthy Downing crushed again.

Feb. 22.—Indiscipline in Opposition.

It is many months since "the Liberal Party were consolidated in the smoking-room of the Reform Club;" but it is evident they have not yet been consolidated in the House of Commons. A bundle of loose sticks, no hand may touch them but they impotently scatter, and the

impossibility of moving them by a single impulse, or in a given direction, may be demonstrated by anybody at any moment on any night of the session. To-night was presented for the edification of the world, and the amusement of the Conservative Party, the familiar spectacle of eruptions from various quarters on the Opposition Benches, each section firing off on its own account without the slightest reference to the eternal principle that all well-regulated volcanic mountains have a common crater.

Possibly what took place to-night may be justly attributed to the recent introduction of a managerial policy of ingenious questioning. For some time past the proper thing—not exclusively prevalent on the Opposition side—when a difficulty arises, is for some private member to get up and put a question to a minister or an ex-minister, which question the right hon. gentleman or noble lord answers with a slight look of surprised interest, and more or less unsuccessfully hides the fact that the interlocutory has been what is called “arranged.” Akin to this is a system of Parliamentary kite-flying by which a private member, at the instigation of gentlemen on one or other of the front benches, draws up a resolution on a ticklish question, and precipitates a debate, in the course of which the opinion of the House may be tested without involving distinguished members.

To-night there was a cloud of notices of motion on the paper with one, half-threatened from the front Opposition bench, raising the question of foreign policy.

In moving the adjournment of the House, in order to find an opportunity of speaking, Mitchell Henry “respectfully asked the leaders of the Opposition” to state what course they intended to take, and so relieve private members from the state of uncertainty under which they laboured. The cry of “Which leader?” persistently rising from the Ministerial benches, Henry apologised to Hartington, and limited the application of his question to the noble lord.

The Ministerialists were jubilant at this cross-fire of insubordination, and indeed the only comfort Liberals may find in the episode centres in the bearing of Hartington. The turn given to events by the direct question of Mitchell Henry was wholly unforeseen, and the noble lord had no time for deliberation on the course he was called upon to take. Yet nothing

could have surpassed the manner or been better than the matter of his brief speech. He took no notice of the unintentional stab from Mitchell Henry, of the defection of Trevelyan, or of the mocking cries with which each had been hailed from the other side. He calmly and judiciously disposed of the question of business arrangement, and then in a few spirited sentences answered the whole case against the Opposition policy, saying more in its defence than its supporters thought was possible.

It is a pity Hartington is so superbly indifferent. If he had but a portion of the superfluity of enthusiasm and of self-assertion that might be found in his immediate neighbourhood he would speedily resolve the doubt as to whether one speaking of the controlling influence amongst ex-ministers should say "the Leader" or "the Leaders" of the Opposition.

Feb. 28.—A cluster of orators.

It is interesting to observe the various ways in which members accustomed to deliver speeches in the House of Commons regard their own performances. Perhaps the man who most thoroughly, even uproariously, enjoys himself on these occasions is Beresford Hope. In truth, he somewhat damages his own case, smothering his good things under predominating guffaws, and strangling his jokes before they are fully born. The House always laughs throughout Beresford Hope's speeches; but it is less at their pointed humour, which is really excellent, than at the spectacle of the hon. member rolling about in ecstasy at a joke which as yet has not fulfilled the period of gestation.

Hope often says exceedingly good things, but he is regarded as a humourist chiefly on account of the strange noises and comical contortions of the body amid which his jests are born. In less marked degree Harcourt takes a mean advantage of his hearers by privately enjoying his jokes before any one else has the chance. Sir William, to do him justice, is conscious of the disadvantage this habit imposes upon a speaker, and ineffectually attempts to smother the chuckle under a prolonged and unmusical "err-err-err."

Forster, as becomes one of Quaker parentage, to whom all subterfuges are vanity, enjoys his own humour so unaffectedly as to render the enjoyment absolutely exclusive. I never heard

Forster make a joke; but I have frequently watched the process of manufacture going on. A joke (made by himself, of course, I mean) takes Forster first in the knees—more particularly the right knee. These (or this) begin wagging more or less furiously according to the calibre of the joke. If it is a very good one the agitation is tremendous, and ex-Ministers on either side begin cautiously but promptly to remove their own limbs from the vicinity of the spot where Forster is standing. Gradually the joke mounts upwards till it reaches his shoulders, which it shakes mercilessly. Next it runs down his arms as far as his elbows, when they also join in the general commotion. As this muscular contortion is the commencement of the expression of humour, so its conclusion is a prolonged chuckle, amid which what remains of the jostled joke is for ever lost. Forster has had a good time with it, but no one else knows anything about it, and people are fain to take its existence for granted.

Newdegate enjoys his own speeches, though in another way, making his own flesh creep with the awesomeness of his tones, and his own hair uplift itself at the mention of the unutterable things which, as far as the House is concerned, are frequently lost in a thrilling but inarticulate whisper. The instances of members who display any personal discomfort when speaking are much more rare. Strange to say, the most insufferable talker in the House, George Balfour, always wears, when gabbling to the empty benches, a facial expression of infinite weariness and pain. A pleading, piteous, restless look on his face favours the idea that Sir George is the unwilling human machinery through which the disembodied spirit of some departed member vexes an assembly which was not too good to him whilst yet he dwelt in the flesh. The theory is that Sir George does not want to thrust himself, as he does so frequently, upon a contumelious House. He would rather take that ease to which a long and honourable career in public life has entitled him, and enjoy the respect and affection of his fellow men. But when he would be quiet, the spirit forces him to his feet, and gabbles forth through his unwilling mouth, at a rate which no human intelligence could follow, a collection of words to which no one pays the compliment even of affecting to listen.

The only other members whom I can call to mind as showing any indication of sharing the discomfort of the House when

they are making a long speech, are Edmond Fitzmaurice and Gorst. Strangely enough, both indicate their sympathy with the audience by the same outward and visible sign, each being accustomed when speaking to change the poise of his body continuously from one foot to the other, as if he were standing on heated iron.

One other member who should have been included in the first list, and observation of whom this evening gave rise to this disquisition, is Mr. Alderman McArthur, who represents in the House the intelligence and culture of Lambeth. Perhaps there is no one who so thoroughly and unaffectedly enjoys his own speech as the worthy alderman. He does not prematurely laugh, or privily chuckle, or in any other way cheat his audience of the full enjoyment of such entertainment as he provides. What he has he gives openly and freely, with a certain stormy ingenuousness, and an air of self-conviction that almost convinces the House. All he asks is, a day or two to commit to paper the heads of his speech, with the peroration fully written out, and a few glasses of water when he rises to speak. To-night Sir James Lawrence, who sat next to him, and undertook to keep the mill supplied with water, behaved rather shabbily, feeding the alderman with only such portion of a glassful as Sydney Waterlow had left after an oration of nearly an hour's duration. The Alderman was so engrossed with the delivery of his speech that he did not notice the little fraud. Like a fledgling in the nest, that opens its mouth and trustfully takes what the parental beak drops in, so did he reach out his hand, and, with averted head, take the partially filled glass his guilty colleague handed him.

No one looking at McArthur as he bustles about the House, or sits spectacled and infinitely wise behind the front Opposition bench, would suspect him of bearing about in his portly person the sacred fire of aldermanic eloquence. One would even think that a gentleman whose views and aspirations are—save for one incongruous flash that carries his vision to far-off Fiji—constitutionally bounded by the limits of a parish, would display some diffidence when rising to speak in the House of Commons. But whoever has thought so has done the alderman an injustice. He addresses the House with all the easy confidence with which he might enchain the Lambeth Vestry, and says to it much the

same things that might be heard at a meeting of that distinguished body. He raises his voice to give emphasis to the most familiar commonplace, points a platitude with a gesture big enough to shake an empire, and has rather an anxious time of it when he reaches the penultimate sentences of his speech, and is not quite sure how they will fit in with the peroration written on the slip of paper he has fished up from the depths of his hat.

To-night he was favoured by fortune, and it was charming to watch him holding the slip of paper at arm's length, and through dimmed spectacles reading out the sonorous sentences deliberately prepared in the seclusion of Brixton Rise. Only spiteful people snap and snarl on these occasions, and wish that the worthy alderman's fondness for the Fijians would lead him to take up his residence in the favoured isle populated by those interesting savages. The alderman is plump and well-favoured, and it is possible to conceive circumstances under which he might give unqualified satisfaction to a numerous and appreciative assemblage of his fellow-creatures.

Mar. 1. — Mr. Biggar and Mr. Chaplin. Chaplin is having a hard time of it in Parliament just now. A week ago he was magnificently tossed by Gladstone; to-day, Biggar, running between his legs, tripped him up. Thus, within the limits of a fortnight he has suffered the two extremes of punishment, genius and stupidity, culture and vulgarity, having in succession assailed and overcome him. On Friday week the scene was almost tragic in its intensity; to-day it has been purely comic, Chaplin's haughty stare, under which Biggar ought to have shrivelled and left a vacancy in the representation of Cavan, adding the last touch needed for the perfection of the comedy.

Chaplin had introduced a Threshing Machine Bill, which had passed the second reading, and it was now proposed that it should go into committee. Biggar moved its rejection, though what the Threshing Machine Bill is to him or he to it remains in the state of doubt that lingers around Hecuba's relation to the player and his to Hecuba.

"Mister Speaker," said the hon. member, rising from below the gangway, and to the horror of the Sergeant-at-Arms

pleasantly walking as he spoke over to the benches nearer the Speaker's private ear, "This Bill's too narrer in its scope, much too narrer."

I suppose what Biggar wants is a comprehensive Threshing Machine Bill, one suitable to both sexes and all ages, adjusting itself with equal ease to the requirements of the truant school-boy and of the "corner men" in the Irish quarter of the Liverpool streets. However it be, this proposal of Chaplin's was "too narrer," and so met with his uncompromising hostility.

It was a quarter past five when the Bill was called on, and as Chaplin contented himself with simply moving that the Speaker leave the chair, Biggar had a whole half hour wherein to converse in order to accomplish his purpose of "talking out" the Bill. Contrary to the popular impression, derived from dim recollection of his famous four hours' speech, the member for Cavan is by no means a fluent speaker. He finds some assistance from the circumstance that he is not particular as to what he says. But even with that advantage he has a difficulty in stringing together sufficient sentences to carry him over half an hour. His four hours' speech was chiefly made up of readings from a Blue Book, and this afternoon he attempted to eke out the time by reading and discussing the clauses of Chaplin's Bill. But herein he committed a distinct breach of order, and first the Speaker and next Pell interfered.

There is about the Parliamentary aspect of Biggar a certain grotesqueness which relieves him from the odium of absolute unpopularity. It is possible to suppose that when, for example, he gave notice of his intention to move the rejection of the Oxford and Cambridge University Bill, he was conscious of the broad humour of the thing. There is something farcical in the metallic sound of his voice; in his attempts to assume a Parliamentary tone; in his odd mispronunciation of words a less reckless man in his circumstances would avoid; and in the argumentative way in which he approaches the discussion of a subject of whose bearings he evidently has no information. When he has made up his comprehensive mind to spite somebody by opposing a measure he has set his heart on advancing by a stage—Biggar always thinly veils his purpose under Parliamentary forms and phrases.

Thus to-day, when he rose on Chaplin's moving his treasured Bill into committee, it was not to vex the soul of the patrician by talking his Bill out. No: his objection simply is that "the scope of the Bill is too narrer, much too narrer, Mister Speaker." When he foils the purpose of a Minister who wants just a few minutes before half-past twelve to pass a measure or a clause through a formal stage, which whether it be done now or next day is not of the slightest importance to any one save the Minister, Biggar moves the adjournment solely on the ground that it is getting late, that the House has been sitting for some hours, that members are weary, and that it is not desirable in the interest of the country that legislation should be hurried through under these circumstances. All this he does in a cool, deliberate manner, and with a grotesque gravity that makes the House laugh in spite of itself.

Mar. 6.—Sir Hardinge Giffard sworn in.

There was a good deal of irreverent jesting at the expense of Kenealy when that great and good man, being returned to Parliament, walked up the floor of the House of Commons, accompanied by a gingham umbrella and a hat, hooking the former on to the neck of the mace, whilst he recklessly deposited the latter on the brass-bound box of Her Majesty's principal Secretary of State. But Wisdom is justified of her children, and it would have been better for Hardinge Giffard to-night if he had been just half as wise as Kenealy, and leaving his umbrella in the cloak-room, had brought his hat to the table with him.

It was a beautiful sight to see the hon. and learned gentleman walking up the floor of the House, guarded on one side by the Ministerial Whip and on the other by the junior member for Oxford University. With hands crossed behind his back, pace attuned to that of his escort, a slight flush on his ingenuous cheek as the jubilant cheers of the Ministerialists hailed his final triumph, and over all a pleased smile of hope, and trust, and rest, the Solicitor-General approached the table, at the corner of which Erskine May stood attendant. Crushed at Cardiff, left in the lurch at Launceston, hustled at Horsham, named as a probable starter at every election race in the three kingdoms that had taken place during the last eighteen months, the blushing borough of Launceston had on a second wooing yielded to his

advances. And now had come the moment of supreme triumph, when his happiness and hers was to be ratified in the presence of all men. It was a moment of sweet content, of proud joy, of high fulfilment of long-delayed reward, the more grateful because so patiently laboured for, and so long withheld.

As the Solicitor-General advanced towards the Speaker, with head coyly bent, with the pleased smile on his face, the unaccustomed blush on his cheek, and the glad eyes that first drank in the tribute of the boisterous welcome from the crowded benches to the left, and then slyly glanced at the not unfriendly faces on the silent benches to the right, there surely was not a happier man in England.

But how transitory is human happiness! When the new member arrived at the table and beheld Erskine May standing there with outstretched hand, he recognised in this another evidence of friendly welcome, and showed a disposition warmly to shake it. But it was the return to the writ the Clerk wanted, and on mastering this new fact a remarkable change came over the Solicitor-General's face. The light faded, the smile vanished, and a dark cloud of doubt brooded over the eyebrows. Where was the indispensable document? He certainly had had it when he entered the House, and it must be in his pocket.

Forthwith he began to search, and to do him justice he proceeded to accomplish his task with a deliberation and a conscientious completeness that for ever establishes his credit for nerve and self-possession. In full gaze of four hundred gentlemen, quizzing, laughing, and cheering, Hardinge Giffard proceeded to look for the certificate with as much coolness and method as if he were searching for an entry in the Record Office. First he emptied the contents of the breast-pocket in his coat, positively littering the table as if a mail-bag had burst over it. From the heap he took up letters one by one, and, carefully scanning them on both sides, laid them aside in orderly succession. This accomplished, he proceeded to search the coat-tail pocket on the Ministerial side in like manner, and with like result. Next the coat-tail pocket on the Opposition side was visited, with prodigious results as to the production of miscellaneous papers, but with like failure as to the discovery of the certificate.

Gracious powers! was there ever a mortal man who went about his daily work so stuffed in flank and rear with letters as this Solicitor-General? A postman on Valentine's Day is a light-weight compared with him. There seemed, first, no end to his pockets, and secondly, no conclusion to his correspondence.

Given this abnormal condition with respect to miscellaneous papers, add the cool deliberation of a search which insisted upon examining each paper in succession back and front; and enclose the picture within a framework of four hundred gentlemen shrieking with laughter, and there is provided some faint notion of how Hardinge Giffard entered Parliament.

When he reached his last pocket and had turned over the ultimate letter, there was a slight pause of wondering expectation, a brief intermission in the noise of cheers and laughter. What would he do next? Had he more letters somewhere? Were his boots stuffed with them? Was his coat lined with them? Did he wear patent expanding trousers, warranted to hold a week's correspondence? Whilst these thoughts passed through the minds of men, and no one would have been surprised to see Sir Hardinge seat himself on the floor and begin to pull off his boots, Dyke, who had been standing by, his recollection of official responsibility vainly struggling with his sense of humour, suddenly darted off down the House. Presently he returned, waving a piece of blue paper.

For a moment an ungenerous suspicion pervaded the Opposition. There is a well-known Parliamentary practice of laying a return on the table "in dummy." Was this a "dummy" certificate hastily devised in order to avert the ludicrous consequence of the Solicitor-General's having to add another day to his long-deferred admission to the honour of a seat in Parliament? A joyous ringing cheer burst forth from the Opposition as the Speaker beckoned Dyke to approach, and privily questioned him touching the *bona-fides* of the blue paper. But it was all right. The new member had left the document in his hat on the benches under the gallery where he had sat, blissfully dreaming in the lustrous sunlight of perfect noonday in which the world, bleak enough to some, for him spun round, as he awaited the Speaker's summons to take his seat on the Treasury Bench.

Mar. 7. — Mr. Seely. No one to look at Seely would imagine that he possessed the power to move a mountain, and yet to-night he has made Ward Hunt roar like a sea-lion. A mild, softly-spoken, precise gentleman of the old school, is Seely, who walks about with disproportionately long strides and vaguely conveys the impression that he wears snow-shoes. It seems a peculiarly happy indication of the fitness of things that he should represent Lincoln, of which one (who really knows nothing about it) has the impression that it is a dapper, clean-looking, highly-respectable, but decidedly slow cathedral city, which years and years ago was stranded somewhere on the east coast, out of the main highway, and has lived very happily there ever since.

Seely contents himself with one speech a year; but what a speech it is! You cannot hear it all, for though his spirit truly is willing, his voice is weak. But—though this impression also is vague and indefinable—you feel that he is framing a tremendous and unanswerable indictment. There is no mistaking the way in which he carries his glasses to his eyes after having made an inaudible remark. You know by the serene expression of his mouth, the flash of the inflexible eye, and the unyielding grip on the *pince-nez*, that somebody has been hit, and hit hard too.

Then when Seely has finished his speech, and sits listening with judicial air to the criticisms of hon. and right hon. gentlemen, he has an impressive way of taking notes, which is perfectly overpowering. It is not done ostentatiously or offensively. Quietly, yet firmly, the highly-polished gold pencil-case travels at brief intervals over the white paper, and the awed observer feels that the counter arguments are already answered. Such is indeed the actual fact. In the course of the debate to-night, Seely took more notes than he could have read out in an hour, and when replying, did not refer to one in a hundred. It was enough that he had noted them down. The presumptuous disputants were answered.

Mar. 8.—A Deputation to Lord Beaconsfield. The Premier received a deputation to-day of which Lord Shaftesbury gives an amusing account, recalling a story told of a deputation that waited on the late Louis XIV. It was composed of

members of the royal household who had a petition to prefer. Bazire and Soulaigre, two of the king's valets, undertook to act as deputies, and obtained without difficulty an audience of the sovereign. The next morning, the chronicler writes, Louis ordered the deputation to be introduced. Bazire, who was to speak, began to have an uncomfortable sinking at the pit of the stomach, his knees were loosened with terror, and he just managed to stammer out the word "Sire." Having repeated this word two or three times, he was seized with a felicitous inspiration.

"Sire," he once more began (and concluded), "here is Soulaigre."

Soulaigre, looking unutterably wretched, commenced in his turn, "Sire—sire—sire,"—then (oh! happy thought) ended like his colleague, "Sire, here is Bazire."

Something very like this happened to-day at the presentation to Beaconsfield of "a beautifully emblazoned address framed and glazed," from the factory operatives of the United Kingdom. The deputation consisted of five gentlemen: Lord Shaftesbury; Mr. Philip Grant, Manchester; Mr. Mathew Balme, Bradford; Mr. John Gorman, Belfast; and Mr. John Middleton, Dundee; the four latter gentlemen understood to represent Lancashire, Yorkshire, Ireland, and Scotland. It had been arranged that each should say a few words, and Lord Shaftesbury concluded his introductory remarks by referring to this treat in store for the Premier. When Lord Shaftesbury had made an end of speaking, Lord Beaconsfield, always polite, remained silent, whilst the four representatives looked uneasily at each other, Mr. Grant saying as plainly as eyes could speak, "My lord, this is Balme;" Mr. Balme remarking through the same medium, "My lord, this is Gorman," and so on the full round. But they did not get beyond this inarticulate mutual identification. The imposing presence of Lord Beaconsfield was too much for them, and the Premier was fain to take their little speeches as read.

Mar. 21.—McCarthy Downing
crushed again.

Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards, and there are few who, tried by this test, will be found to have proved their manhood more indisputably than McCarthy Downing. He is personally of a genial and sanguine disposition, inclined to take kindly and

hopeful views of life. He characteristically calls his mansion in lordly county Cork "Prospect House," and, sitting under his own vine and fig-tree, he looks out on a world that has never estimated him at his true value, determinedly hoping that by-and-by things will mend. The future is full of hope, and Downing lives in the "Prospect." Skibbereen, the nearest post town to his dwelling-house, has shown its appreciation of his merits in a marked manner. For six years in succession he has been enthusiastically and triumphantly elected chairman of the Skibbereen Town Commissioners, an honour which a man might be proud to have conferred upon him once, but which five times repeated seems to fill to the brim the cup of human aspiration and to furnish the crown of mortal glory.

But there is a skeleton in every cupboard, a canker in many rose-buds. For years Downing has cherished the desire to change the name of the township with which he has been so long, so honourably, and so prominently connected. I forget at the moment what it is he would have it called; I know it is a fine flowing name which would look much better as a postal direction in connection with "Prospect House." But he has been thwarted at the Board, denounced on the highway, fiercely attacked by the *Skibbereen Eagle*. After a prolonged struggle "Prospect House" is to this day "near Skibbereen."

It is in the House of Commons that Downing is accustomed to meet with the most notable checks, and suddenly, when he is sunning himself with the conviction that he has made a capital speech, to find himself the object of attack from an unexpected quarter. Thus it happened two sessions ago, when yielding to the impulse of a kindly nature and the habit, cultured in Skibbereen, of coming to the front when opportunity offered, he took upon himself to express in the name of the Irish people a sense of the fairness and candour with which Hicks-Beach had conducted a debate on the Peace Preservation Act. Glowing with generous feeling and expanding with the pleasing sense of patronising the secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, Downing on that memorable occasion made a really admirable speech, which affected Tom Conolly—now, alas! no longer with us—to tears. Downing's own voice faltered with emotion, and there was a general, though inarticulate, feeling in the House that if he could only have fallen back in Meldon's arms as he finished, and

if The O'Donoghue had wiped his forehead with the corner of a handkerchief dipped in a glass of water with which the Chief Secretary had run across the floor, a new era would have dawned upon the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and a real union of peoples would have been brought within reach of the outstretched hand.

But this picture of what might have been was marred by a double offence which Downing had unconsciously been guilty of. As nearly every Irish member thinks that only he, or in his absence, Butt, is qualified to speak in the name of the Irish people, Downing, by his open assumption of such right, stirred indignation in a score of hearts. Moreover, he had, from his place in the House of Commons, advanced the dangerous doctrine that a Saxon Minister could, under any possible circumstances, deal honestly, fairly, and even generously with Irish business. I tremble at this moment when I call to mind the scene which followed, and remember how poor Downing seemed visibly to grow sparer and sparer in person, how his hair appeared to thin, and how his cheeks fell in, burying the ghastly smile that had bravely bisected his visage, as member after member rose in flank and rear, disputed in the name of Ireland his right to speak for her, and denounced him as a traitor.

That was a severe shock to Downing, and for many months he lived in retirement. But his temperament is elastic, his mind is cheerful, and he is incapable of bearing malice. To see him to-day, happy in having early caught the Speaker's eye, one would have thought that sorrow had never visited him, and that the talons of the *Skibbereen Eagle* had never been fastened in his throat. How conclusive were his arguments! how profound his research! how withering his denunciation of the landlord tainted with the original sin of wanting rent for his property! how loud his voice! and how magnificent the gesture with which he flung on the seat behind him the last page of his voluminous notes, and taking off his glasses, confidently put it to the House whether, after hearing all this, they could say that Butt's Bill, "for which he (Downing) was to a certain extent responsible," should not pass?

For nearly two hours he was safe and happy. Nobody had dissented from his speech—indeed nobody had noticed it. The House was just on the verge of a division. In four

minutes all danger would be over, and there would remain the untempered joy of having made a long speech. It was just at this moment that Bright, of all men, rose from the front Opposition bench, where he had sat all the afternoon with many signs of interest in the debate. It had been expected that he would speak, but as he let opportunity after opportunity slip, the expectation was abandoned. However, here he was, at the last possible moment. What was he going to say? It must be something weighty and urgent or he would not imperil the division by speaking at nineteen minutes to six. The House, crowded for the division, was instantly hushed. All eyes were bent upon the figure of the great orator and old friend of Ireland, as he stood strangely trembling and awaiting the coming of the once-powerful voice, that was laboriously mustering its shattered strength before it might be heard. Men at the back of the throng at the bar stood on tiptoe to catch sight of Bright. Men on the back benches on the Liberal side strained their necks in the endeavour to watch his face as he spoke, prominent in the crowd of faces being the pleased countenance of McCarthy Downing.

Was Bright going to declare for the Bill? or was he going to deal it the heavy blow of his disapproval? It seemed a long waiting before he found his voice, and then—ah, *ce pauvre* Downing! It was *him* that the great orator, the unpurchasable friend of Ireland, had risen to denounce for his personal attack upon a well-known Irish landlord, and he did it with a vigour and a warmth that crumpled up Downing. It was almost cruel in its suddenness, unexpectedness, and dramatic completeness, and supplied another example of the fate which curiously pursues an inoffensive and well-meaning man.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. BUTT DEPOSED.

A lost chance—Mr. Trevelyan and the Athenæum—Mr. Julian Goldsmid's hat—Mr. Butt in low water—A serious charge—Break-up of the Home Rule Party—A mixed metaphor—The Opposition and the Ministry.

Mar. 22.—A lost chance. Whilst intending candidates for a seat in the House of Commons are awaiting the general election, they might do worse than study the Parliamentary career of Sir George Campbell. He entered the House in April, 1875, under circumstances of unusual promise. He was a Campbell, a Knight of the Star of India, a man profoundly versed in law, who knew India thoroughly, and had brought home the reputation of having administered the Government of Bengal in a conspicuously able manner. Moreover, he arrived at Westminster at a time when the affairs of India were attracting an exceptional measure of attention. In his first session the famine was the subject of anxious interest in Parliament, and who knew more about the attendant circumstances than the ex-Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal? In his second session it pleased Providence and Disraeli to make the Queen Empress of India, and to Sir George Campbell the House naturally turned for information as to the practical effects of such a proposal. Again, the intentions of Russia in respect of India were much discussed last session, and hereon, also, Sir George was qualified to speak as one having authority and not as Butler-Johnstone. He might, despite the irritating influence of his voice, have attained a position as Chief Adviser of the House on Indian affairs, and his influence for the good of a country Englishmen do not understand, and therefore neglect, might have gone beyond all precedent.

That is what might have been. What actually is will appear from the fact that Campbell, rising just now to put a question, was positively and literally hooted as I never heard a man hooted in the House of Commons. It was a remarkable scene, and it need not be regretted if the lesson it

conveys be taken to heart. For two years the member for Kirkcaldy has been leading up to the climax of to-night, and the marvel is that it was not earlier brought about. It is no new thing that a man, who having done more or less good work in India gains a seat in the House of Commons, should come to be regarded as a bore. It is at least as old as the time of Warren Hastings. There was in the Parliament in which the figure of Mr. Pitt largely loomed a certain Major Scott, late of the Bengal Army. He obtained a seat in the House chiefly to advocate the cause of his patron and employer, the Governor-General, and how he got on is best related in Lord Macaulay's words.

"He was always on his legs," Macaulay writes; "he was very tedious; and he had only one topic. Everybody who knows the House of Commons will easily guess what followed. The Major was soon considered as the greatest bore of his time."

"Everybody who knows the House of Commons" will also recognise in this picture the features of more than one member accustomed and qualified to speak on Indian topics. But as Primrose Hill is dwarfed by comparison with the proportions of Ben Nevis, so Sir George Campbell overshadows the claims which other Anglo-Indians might put forward to the dignity of the bore. Like Major Scott in respect of frequency of appearance and of tediousness of speech, Sir George excels him inasmuch as he has more than "one topic." He is sure to speak when the question before the House relates in however indirect a manner to India; the chances are nine to one that when any other topic is under discussion he will speak. It being impossible to count with certainty upon catching the Speaker's eye whenever one pleases, Sir George, like an old campaigner, has turned his attention to the almost untrammelled privilege of putting questions, and this he has worked with a vigour and a pertinacity which has at length drawn down upon him the painful demonstration of to-night.

Nothing can interfere with a man's putting a question, and a little adroitness enables him to overcome the difficulty of the prohibition of introducing argument. Sir George has liberally taken advantage of this chink in the armour of Parliamentary indifference. If the daily Orders since Parliament met this session be referred to, it will be found that Sir George Campbell has put more questions than any other individual member. Scarcely a

night passes without his name appearing on the paper, and there was an occasion a fortnight ago, when he rose three several times in immediate succession, and put three lengthy and lawyer-like questions to hapless Ministers! *

There are profound depths of patience in the House of Commons, but they are not unfathomable. Sir George Campbell, recklessly diving to-night, came suddenly and unexpectedly upon the bottom, which he found to be composed of adamantine rocks, and jagged withal. His name appeared upon the notice paper at the head of three questions which, with an unusual show of deference to the prejudices of the House, he had lumped together, making them look as like one as possible. He presented himself at a moment when the House had just had its brow ruffled by the spectacle of Macdonald standing out on the floor with his subtly irritating

“Mr. Speaker—Sir—I beg leave to ask the ritehon’able genelman the Secreray of State for the ’Ome Department——”

Sir George rose two seats behind the bench on which the member for Stafford basks, and putting his glasses up, there rang through the House the harsh metallic and slightly nasal preliminary note which members instinctively associate with the forthcoming utterance of something disagreeable. But Sir George did not get any further. Suddenly, with startling force and surprising unanimity, there burst forth from the Ministerial benches a yell which it is said fluttered the fish in the Westminster Aquarium. Sir George, with the paleness of his parchment skin grown a shade whiter, stood facing the roaring multitude, and vainly trying to speak. His lips moved, and something like the faint echo of the unspeakable voice was heard above the din. Only that, and nothing more, though it was evident from the heaving of his chest and the widely-parted lips that Sir George of Edenwood was shouting at the top of his voice.

For fully two minutes—one hundred and twenty seconds—this astounding legislative procedure prevailed. Then the Speaker, who had been making labial signs of cries of “Order!” rose to his feet, and so far quelled the tumult that the harshly metallic

* In 1877 it seems to have been a matter memorable for a fortnight that a member should have put three questions at a single sitting. In the session of 1884 it was a common occurrence for three members to have among them from twenty to thirty questions addressed to Ministers at one sitting.

voice of the Star of India might be heard to say that it would not recite the obnoxious question relating to Valentine Baker. Hereupon comparative silence fell on the angry and tumultuous House, and Sir George put his first two questions, omitting the last, which, in an utterly gratuitous manner, struck a blow at a helpless man who has erred and has been adequately punished.

Apr. 4.—Mr. Trevelyan and the Athenæum. It appears to be the fashion just now in certain clubs to make dead sets at individuals. Trevelyan coming up for election at the Athenæum to-day, a determined effort was made to prevent his election. As one black-ball in ten would suffice for this purpose, a strong whip was made in the candidate's support, members from both sides of the House taking part in the voting. The result was that Trevelyan was elected by a considerable majority, 329 votes being recorded in his favour, and twenty ineffective black-balls being counted out of the other box.

Apr. 5.—Mr. Julian Goldsmid's hat. I think that as the years roll by Julian Goldsmid grows worse and worse as a speaker. He always had a sing-song intonation, and ever rocked to and fro his body, posed on widely-parted feet, dreamily suggesting to Ward Hunt, as he slumbered on the Treasury Bench, reminiscences of a curate he had seen somewhere reciting the Baptismal Service over a babe which he held in unaccustomed arms, and vaguely rocked. But the mannerisms of early Parliamentary utterance have by practice grown so marked as to become positively ludicrous. To-night Goldsmid was in a more than usually pleased state of mind. It was *he* who had suggested the making of a statement on introducing the Civil Service estimates, a process now going forward in an almost empty House. The performance was, in short, a sort of Parliamentary bespeak, and though pit, gallery, and boxes were empty, here was the distinguished patron in his place in a front box, gently applauding and graciously nodding his head as the Star recited his part.

When W. H. Smith sat down, Goldsmid rose, and completed the happiness of everybody by expressing his approval—incidentally of the speech by the Secretary of the Treasury, principally of the novel procedure just inaugurated, and which, as he

distantly mentioned, he had himself suggested. This was all very well, but there was more to follow. In rising to patronise W. H. Smith, the Government, and the House generally, Goldsmid had judiciously placed his hat on the seat behind him. Carried away by the musical tones of his own voice, and simmering in the pleased consciousness of the position, he unfortunately forgot all about his hat, and having brought his remarks to a conclusion, and having bestowed a parting blessing upon W. H. Smith, he abruptly sat down in the very middle of the article.

I have seen some narrow escapes with hats in the House of Commons. Whalley's hat, for example, is a source of much anxiety to him, for as he always places it on the seat exactly behind him, and as he is constantly being brought up short by the Speaker, it follows that there is a good deal of manœuvring with his head-gear. But this constant practice also has its compensating effect, and it has come to pass that he no sooner sees the Speaker's hands going out towards the uttermost edge of the arms of his chair with intent to assist his dignified uprising, than Whalley begins to feel for his hat.

Newdegate also has difficulties with his hat, whilst Sir George Bowyer avoids danger by placing the covering of his venerable and venerated head, rim upwards, far out on the floor of the House, where it stands a melancholy monument of patient endurance of long usage, rough weather, and an apparent habitude on the part of the owner to brush the nap the wrong way.

But never was there such a complete wreck of a hat as Julian Goldsmid effected just now. The curious "crunching" sound emitted by the astonished and swiftly collapsing cylinder was heard all over the House, and it was in vain that Goldsmid, leaping up as if he had sat on a wasp's nest, began diligently and unconcernedly to straighten out the wreck and brush it with his arm, as if nothing particular had happened.

Apr. 6.—Mr. Butt It is half an hour after midnight, and Butt is
in low water. sitting sad and spiritless on the corner seat above the gangway, as far away as possible from the newly formed Irish party, of which Biggar is the head, Parnell the tail, and towards which Nolan occupies the honourable position of body-guard. Butt, roused beyond the limits of his customary good-humoured forbearance by more than usually unreasonable

conduct on the part of Parnell, has just been on his feet, begging that gentleman to desist from obstruction, which it happened in this particular case barred the way of confessedly desirable legislation for Ireland. Parnell openly and contemptuously defied him. Biggar regarded him with an insolent smile; whilst Nolan made half-audible observations which might, or might not, have been complimentary.

The great body of the Irish members who, overpowered by the volubility of Parnell and the grim humour of Biggar, are more and more abstaining from attendance on Parliamentary duties, have gone home. Only McCarthy Downing is here, and he, with accustomed chivalry, threw himself into the breach to support his chief, recklessly braving the contumely, misrepresentation, coarse vituperation, and insinuation of base motives with which his conduct will surely be treated by the section of the Irish press which holds it patriotic to support Biggar and Parnell.

With flushed face, shrunken figure, and restless hands, the nervous movement of which indicates the depth of his vexation of spirit, Mr. Butt sits with his back half turned to his compatriots. It is a pretty picture, one which Ireland should have suitably framed, and set up in all its public places and all its private parlours. If an inscription were wanted it might run thus :—

After devoting the best days of his life to the service of his country; after having established for Irish members a PARLIAMENTARY STATUS hitherto unknown; after having gained the admiration of the world by his genius, and the esteem of his friends for his many kind qualities, Isaac Butt is insulted in the House of Commons by Mr. Biggar, Mr. Parnell, and Captain Nolan.

Apr. 9. — A serious charge. At twenty minutes past twelve W. H. Smith moved to report progress in Committee of Supply, Dilke having just moved to reduce the vote on Royal Parks by £155, charged for feeding the deer in Richmond Park.

Parnell opposed the motion, with the object, as Butt explained, of "obstructing" the progress of the Public Health (Ireland) Bill.

In the animated and desultory conversation which followed, Nolan, being on his legs, took notice of the fact that Benett-Stanford coughed. Benett-Stanford thereupon rose to order,

and asked the Chairman whether the hon. member was in order in drawing attention to the circumstance that he had coughed. Parnell interposing, Nolan did not conclude the observations he had risen to make, and eventually, after some crimination and recrimination between the Irish members, progress was reported, the intent of the Obstructionists being effected, inasmuch as it was now too late to take the Public Health Bill.

Apr. 10.—Break-up of the Home Rule Party.

Biggar and Parnell may probably be on the right tack for the dismemberment of the British Empire; at present all that they have achieved is the disruption of the Home Rule party. In the House of Commons, with the exception of Callan, Nolan, and possibly Fay—though that gentleman has shown himself much quieter than at one time he promised to be—the members for Meath and Cavan stand alone among the Home Rulers in the peculiar tactics they have lately pursued. Nolan has retired from the office of whip; but it is not generally known that he did so as the direct consequence of a written remonstrance addressed to him by Butt. Butt pointed out that the course Nolan was taking in backing up Biggar and Parnell was derogatory to the true interests of the Irish party in Parliament. After this there was nothing for Nolan but to resign, and Francis Conyngham reigns in his stead. I hear that Butt has also placed in written form his protest against the conduct of Biggar and Parnell. But that is a little incident which in no way ruffles the even tenor of the way of those two distinguished statesmen.

The probabilities at the present moment appear to point to the creation of a Home Rule party within the Home Rule party, and there is some hope that Butt, A. M. Sullivan, Mitchell Henry, Shaw, and other gentlemen who lend character and ability to the party may, by the mere force of the example set them by the members for Meath and Cavan, become really useful members of an Imperial Legislature.

Apr. 12.—A mixed metaphor.

The confusion of metaphor in the House of Commons occasionally reaches a pitch of much excellence. Up to the present time, however, I think the palm

belongs to Rodwell, who, on Friday, piteously pleaded against a proposal of the Chairman of Ways and Means, which he said would lead to gas bills going into Committee with "a rope round their necks."

Apr. 13. — The Hartington's speech to-night, on moving for
Opposition and papers on the affairs of Turkey, would have
the Ministry. been a great Parliamentary success had it been delivered by some one else, and had it been built up on some other resolution. It is admirably conceived, the argument is easily and naturally arranged, and it is full of telling sentences. But at the very outset Hartington dropped into that regular cadence, that sing-song intonation, which is the dirge of uttered speech. And yet he has marvellously improved as a Parliamentary speaker since he assumed the responsibilities and enjoyed the advantages of the leadership of the Opposition. There was a time when, owing to an exaggeration of the intonation referred to, the latter part of his sentences was hopelessly lost somewhere in the neighbourhood of the middle button of his waistcoat. To-night it was notable that, starting on the old familiar sing-song key with a few sentences carefully committed to memory, he presently warmed with his subject, and began to talk in a natural unaccentuated tone that greatly aided his argument. On the whole, I should say that this speech of to-night was the best-prepared essay he has recited to an attentive House. It bristled with points, and there were none of those oases of dreary verbiage amidst which a respectable but somewhat bored assembly has in times past been wont to slumber.

The worst and the weakest part of the speech was the resolution. Supposing it had been part of the programme that the leader of the Opposition should have concluded his address with a distinct and definite resolution, the eternal fitness of things would have been happily vindicated. But Hartington stood towards the Ministry somewhat in the position that a respectable householder might stand towards a burglar, at whose head he was holding a formidable-looking blunderbuss which both knew was unloaded. He presented himself in approved position, with the stock of his blunderbuss sharply brought to his shoulder, his finger lightly but firmly touching the trigger, and

the muzzle of the weapon unerringly covering the body of the party with whom he had a difference. But the barrel was empty of powder and shot. There was not even a percussion cap on the nipple; and it was only the successfully serious look of Hartington that prevented the actors in the farce from bursting into laughter in each other's face.

It is not the least fortunate circumstance in the condition of the Ministry that they have for these occasions a speaker like Gathorne Hardy to follow the Leader of the Opposition. There is no one to equal the Secretary of War for stirring the life-blood of good Conservatives, and making all their pulses beat with the consciousness that they are once more assisting at the salvation of the Constitution. I believe that if, on an occasion like that of to-night, Gathorne Hardy were placed in a sound-proof glass case, in full view of the Conservative party, he would as he spoke, albeit no words reached them, raise their spirits in an almost equal degree, and would certainly draw forth outbursts of applause scarcely less enthusiastic.

The difference between a speech by Hartington and one by Hardy may be broadly marked by the distinction that one is very convincing when read, whilst the other is exhilaratingly convincing when spoken. Hardy is, far away, the most successful debater on the Ministerial bench. He has not the logical power of his only compeer, the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but he is so buoyant, so enthusiastic, and, in short, so breathless, that he quite carries away his audience, more particularly those sections of it which were prepared to be convinced. It is something more than probable that if his points were taken up one by one and submitted, say by Lowe, to Her Majesty's Judges sitting *in banco*, it would be found that there was not much in them. But sufficient for the day is the argument thereof. What Hardy had to do to-night was to pit his passionate outbursts of vocalisation against the dry, cold, unimpassioned arguments of Hartington, and he succeeded à *merveille*.

Edmonstone was in raptures, and, having fanned his own copy of the Orders into fragments, he abstracted that of the member near him, and created quite a trade wind between Cape Smith and the Bay of Bourke—that is to say, between that portion of the Treasury Bench marked by the back of W. H.

Smith's head and the place bounded on the north by the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and on the south by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord John Manners, ambling into the House and standing for a moment at the Bar, surveyed the scene and ambled away again to write his letters, serene in the consciousness that all was going well.

In truth, if the Postmaster-General had many letters to write, he was much better occupied in the Library than in the House itself. It was exactly the old thing all over again, and if Ward Hunt had happened to be present he might, on being awakened by the stentorian cheers that greeted some of Hardy's glowing commonplaces, have imagined that he was some weeks younger, and that the debate was either the one brought on by Gladstone or the other insisted upon by Fawcett. There was on the part of the Opposition precisely the same severity of words undermined by the same burlesque of action; the same bombastic periods from the mouth of Hardy, pointed by the same taunts of impotence, and built up by the same thunderous cheers from an overwhelming majority. Moreover, had Ward Hunt fitfully slept on, there would have been nothing in the course of the evening to disturb his illusion. The attack, having been hesitatingly made from the front bench on the Opposition side, was boisterously answered from the front bench on the Ministerial side. Then the crowded House dwindled down to the point of emptiness; on the one side Forsyth, like a modern member of Elijah's congregation on Mount Carmel, halting between two opinions, though constitutionally prone to bend the knee to Baal; and on the other, Evelyn Ashley, hymning the praises of a statesman who once was privileged to have him for private secretary.

After this epoch, members, having dined, came back like the flowing tide, tumultuously covering the sandy reaches represented by the desolate benches. Then the conflict raged once more, the Opposition ingeniously endeavouring to hide away the unloaded blunderbuss, and the Ministerialists heroically demanding that it should be fired, there being not one of them, whether below the gangway or above it, who was not ready, in the name of Queen and country, to bare his breast and receive the contents of the barrel.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE GREAT TICHBOURNE DEMONSTRATION.

A deputation to the Commons—The Queen in a thunderstorm—The Speaker and the pickpocket—An old-fashioned Home Rule debate—A pointed inquiry—The Burials Bill in the Lords—A lament for the lost leader.

Apr. 17.—A deputation to the Commons. Deary me! To think that we are safe after all; that Parliament Street has not been made to run with gore; that the cabmen's shelter in Palace Yard has not been used for barricade purposes; and that Westminster Hall is not paved with well-intentioned corpses. Never since the time when Lord George Gordon sat under the gallery of the House with the blue cockade in his hat, whilst a mad mob, distinguished by wearing the same favour, ran riot in the streets, has the House of Commons presented such an imposing aspect of armed neutrality. There have been policemen, policemen everywhere, and—as one wearily observed to a comrade after standing in the rank for two hours—not a drop to drink. There have been policemen at the Peers' entrance; policemen massed in the courtyard leading to the Ladies' Gallery; policemen in Westminster Hall; policemen in all the coal-cellars; and policemen inconveniently crowded in the chamber at the top of the tower devoted to the apparatus of the electric light.

Members disregarding of the eloquence of Knatchbull-Hugessen, who, inside the House, has been steaming away at the rate of four miles an hour *apropos* of the Railway Passenger Duty, have been wandering nervously and restlessly about the lobbies and corridors. Some of the more adventurous, holding their lives in their hands, have even penetrated so far as the outposts by Bridge Street. The military and naval M.P.'s have mustered in reassuring force, prepared to show that in time of action they can do something more than deliver dreary speeches. The most fearful rumours fill the air. It is said that a mysterious-looking craft, standing off and on by Westminster Bridge stairs, is waiting, in the event of matters taking

a serious turn, to convey the First Lord of the Admiralty down to Greenwich. Edmonstone, with his hat truculently cocked on one side, has for more than an hour been pacing up and down the terrace, with regulation quarter-deck tread. He has a copy of the Orders rolled up under his arm in the form of a telescope; but whether it is with intent presently to use the temporary cylinder as a makeshift telescope, or whether it be a reserve to supply the place of the copy which he carries in his right hand, and wherewith he fiercely fans himself, is not known. Elcho, with the consent of Mr. Superintendent Mott, has taken command of a small body of police massed in the Speaker's Court, and is exercising them in the art of advancing by rushes at full running speed from side to side of the courtyard, the advances being made by echelon of subdivisions.

George Balfour has a plan which, unlike General Trochu under similar circumstances, he is anxious to communicate in full detail to any one who will listen to him. Amongst those who will not is Henry Havelock, who to-night secretly wears his Victoria Cross, and is prepared, if fortune favours him with opportunity, to earn, if he may not obtain, a duplicate. At the present moment, Sir George has got hold of Lord Ernest Bruce, and the two sit side by side just above the gangway, Sir George whispering in a rapid tone in the ear of the noble lord, who sits with closed eyes and a fixed expression of countenance. Bruce evidently understands the plan, and is much struck by its feasibility. The only personage who maintains his presence of mind is the Serjeant-at-Arms, who calmly walks about the lobby, smiling genially. As Storer, who is rather nervous, says, the mere presence of Captain Gosset is, on occasions like these, worth a file of the Life Guards.

Knatchbull-Hugessen has exhausted himself, not to mention his audience. Serjeant Spinks is just up, which adds to the liveliness of the evening. The learned Serjeant is presently followed by Earl Percy, who will some day be the Duke of Northumberland, and, in the meantime, is a tall young gentleman of undecided aspect, and an uncomfortable consciousness that his legs are of more than ordinary length. I wonder what the stout Lord Percy, who fought at Chevy-Chase, would think, supposing he might look down from the Strangers' Gallery and behold this inheritor of his fame trifling with his trouser-

pocket and ungracefully hopping about from foot to foot in the attempt to appear entirely at his ease when addressing the House of Commons on the Railway Passenger Duty?

That other man of war, Cornet Brown, has a good deal of trouble with his legs when addressing the House, and, like Percy, his bashful hands seek the shelter of his pocket during his oratorical flights. But it is in the neighbourhood of the knees that the gallant Cornet is more particularly affected. Percy avoids the knocking of his knees together by keeping his legs widely apart and maintaining, whilst he speaks, a promenade between the bench and the red line on the matting, a procedure which sometimes brings him perilously near to transgression of the rule which forbids any member, except Plimsoll, to address the Speaker from the middle of the floor. It is estimated that in a speech of half an hour's duration, Percy walks a distance equal to that which lies between Palace Yard and Pall Mall. This beats Lord Eslington, who, in the same time and under similar circumstances, is estimated to walk not further than from the bottom of Parliament Street to the Post Office at Charing Cross.

8.0 p.m.—Stafford Northcote is on his feet, addressing the House on the Railway Passenger Duty with an apparent absorption in his subject, which is in itself a certificate of valour. But it is outside the House proper that the interest centres, and that members congregate. Little groups stand about the lobbies, gaily chatting, and to all appearance in full enjoyment of some stupendous joke. But there is a hollow ring about the laughter that betrays the hidden fear, and the constant reference to the clock and to watches shows how strained is their nervous temperament. Whalley flits about with furrowed brow and with head bowed down with the weight of the mighty thoughts that freight it. How wistfully members regard the member for Peterborough, whom yesterday they were wont to laugh at, and in whom they to-day recognise a possible dictator! How respectfully they make way for him to pass as he walks hurriedly about! The Roman Catholic members are almost servile in their attentions to him; for who knows but that ere to-morrow's sun has set, Whalley, having seen justice done to Sir Roger Tichborne, may turn his attention towards that "foreign influence" to whose machinations he has more than once alluded

in the House of Commons? Let us, while the time is favourable, make friends with the victor of to-morrow.

8.5 P.M.—There is a commotion at the entrance to the lobby, leading inwards from the Octagon Hall. Whalley is sent for, and with long strides sets out for the hall, everybody respectfully making way for him as before. A brief parley ensues between the agitated policemen on guard and the sternly self-possessed senator. In the end nine men, each distinguished by a bit of red ribbon worn in the button-hole, are passed through beyond the pressure of the crowd outside, and hold an excited interview with Whalley. There is evidently something amiss, and members in the inner lobby, always loudly laughing and unsuccessfully maintaining the thin disguise of merriment which shields a quaking breast, ask each other what can it be? Then a dreadful whisper goes about that De Morgan* is missing. It seems that he accompanied the nine men with bits of red ribbon in their button-hole as a deputation from the mob in Trafalgar Square to the recreant House of Commons. On the way The De Morgan was missed—suddenly disappeared, and has gone no one knows whither.

Nobody speaks, but it is clear that the same horrid fear possesses every mind. The De Morgan has been entrapped by a perfidious police, has been overcome by superior numbers, and now, doubtless, lies chained hand and foot in the lowest dungeon beneath the castle moat. The deputation gesticulate around Whalley, the crowd of members encircling them always wearing the same ineffectual affectation of regarding the whole affair as what Pip and Joe Gargery were wont to call "larks." Then Whalley addresses the deputation, who want him to present a petition, with which one of them has for some minutes been excitedly butting him in the ribs, by way of keeping his wandering attention fixed. Whalley, who is supernaturally calm, addresses the deputation at some length, and, without once referring to the foreign influence, he explains that the hour for presenting petitions has gone by, but undertakes that

* An inconsiderable agitator who at this time had associated himself with the cause of the Claimant. A great meeting was, on the evening of the 17th April, held in Trafalgar Square, and there were some threats of marching down on the House of Commons. Extraordinary precautions were taken by the authorities to prevent disorder in the neighbourhood of the House.

he will, on the following day, present the petition, and move that The De Morgan be heard at the bar. Then the deputation excitedly withdraw.

But where is The De Morgan?

9.30 P.M.—Another moment, and in the Octagon Hall servitors fly quickly to and fro, charged with messages pregnant with great consequences to the stability of an empire upon which the sun never sets. The long-lost De Morgan has arrived and claims admittance to the Commons House of Parliament. Colonel Pearson, the lieutenant of the Chief of the Metropolitan Police, throws himself across the passage and swears that if he (De Morgan) goes that way it shall be over his (Colonel Pearson's) body. Whalley is again sent for, and comes forth, striding as before, firmly, and, if I may say so, longly. A hurried consultation takes place between The De Morgan and the hon. member, and the crowd have time to gaze wonderingly at the face and figure of the man who has brought together one hundred thousand men (more or less) to demand the release of the unhappy nobleman now languishing in the state-supported prison of a western county. A youthful, slim, fragile person is The De Morgan, with a 'aughty look on his insignificant features, well calculated to strike terror into the bosom of a policeman six foot high. One fancies he has seen these two men standing out in the pages of a familiar history of earlier date. How far the resemblance between Whalley and Lord George Gordon, with his naturally generous sympathies and his constitutionally ill-regulated mind, extends, there may be some difference of opinion. But no one can fail to be struck with the singularly close resemblance between Lord George's ally, Simon Tappetit, and The De Morgan. As the latter, standing at the portal of the House of Commons, with the re-united deputation at his right hand, loftily glances round at the curious crowd, one almost expects to hear him burst forth in the eloquent words of Sim, spoken in the moment of his triumph.

"You meet in me," Sim said, "not a 'prentice, not a workman, not a slave, but the leader of a great people, the captain of a noble band, in which these gentlemen are, I may say, corporals and sergeants. You behold in me not a private individual, but a public character; not a mender of locks, but a healer of the wounds of this unhappy country."

But The De Morgan did not deign to address the crowd. Whalley, in his usual generous and profuse manner, had mentioned the word "refreshments," and the soul of The De Morgan had stirred within him. He had done enough for glory, and now he wanted his tea. So he turned with Whalley, and walking away, was piloted to the Strangers' Refreshment Room, where, at the tariff price of eighteenpence per head, he munched the mellifluous muffin, and, having emptied the teapot, timidly asked the waiter to fill it up again with the bounteous and boiling water.

Thus happily closed the great and eventful day, which began with menaces and ended with muffins.

Apr. 20. — The Queen in a thunderstorm. There is a curious story afloat about Lord Beaconsfield's visit to the Queen on Saturday week.

It is said that the proposal he submitted for the approval of Her Majesty involved prompt action, which appeared to be the immediate prelude of British participation in a great war. Whilst the Sovereign and the Premier were discussing the matter there suddenly burst forth a tremendous thunder-storm. Beaconsfield, who has long been accustomed to pyrotechnical displays, was wholly undisturbed by the pealing thunder and the flashing lightning. But Her Majesty, though by no means prone to superstition, was not able to regard the coincidence with the same equanimity, and refused to give the necessary authorisation. The audience then terminated; but Beaconsfield calmly waited till the thunderstorm was over, when the interview was renewed, and Her Majesty approved the spirited foreign policy submitted to her.

Apr. 23. — The Speaker and the pickpocket. It is said that when, on Saturday night, the Speaker on leaving the theatre discovered that he had been robbed of his watch, the right hon. gentleman, in that sonorous tone by which he is accustomed to check indiscretions or rebuke irregularities in the House of Commons, ejaculated—"Order! order!"

Apr. 24.—An old-fashioned Home Rule debate. Shaw found an early opening for moving his resolution for a Select Committee to inquire into and report upon the nature, the extent, and grounds of the demand made by a large proportion of the Irish

people for the restoration to Ireland of an Irish Parliament, with power to control the internal affairs of that country. He supported this proposition, in an able and temperate speech, chiefly on the grounds that experience showed that the Parliament at Westminster had not time or opportunity fairly to deal with Irish topics, and, moreover, that Englishmen had neither the aptitude nor the education to direct the internal affairs of Ireland. The motion was seconded from the Conservative benches by King-Harman.

Forster discussed the question at some length, traversing the various allegations that the British Parliament was incapacitated from dealing with Irish affairs alike by lack of sympathy, want of time, and need of education. He pointed out that if the demand were acceded to, and an Irish Parliament were established, collisions with the Imperial Parliament were sure to follow; collisions which would result in civil war. He nevertheless regarded Home Rule as marking a great progress in Irish political life, for it indicated on the part of the promoters a consciousness of the difficulties that stood in the way of the isolation of Ireland as part of the British Empire. In the course of his speech he was about to refer to statements made by Parnell, when that gentleman, rising from under the gallery, took the opportunity of denouncing the accuracy of the report which he presumed Forster was about to refer to, and which, he said, was as inaccurate as are the reports usually given by the London papers of his speeches.

A very full House was kept together during Forster's speech, the audience including a crowd of peers, just released from attendance in the other House. Forster brought the debate up to the dinner hour, and accordingly Colman O'Loughlen, who followed, had a very scanty audience, the Home Rulers, with the exception of Sullivan, The O'Connor Don, O'Clery, O'Reilly, and four others, leaving the House with the crowd. The debate was continued by W. Johnston, Blennerhasset, Bruen, and O'Shaughnessy. Fawcett said he was at a loss to know what Home Rule meant and advanced. Amid loud cheers he declared that neither the Liberal nor the Conservative party would surrender their personal convictions to the Home Rule cabal. Wilfrid Lawson said he would vote for the Select Committee, as he was anxious to support anything that offered the faintest chance of stop-

ping the long and weary controversy between Ireland and England.

C. Lewis thought that the time had come when members should speak out plainly on this subject. For his part he denounced the terrorism that existed among the constituencies on the subject of Home Rule. Addressing himself to both sides of the House, Lewis called up what he described as "the twin spectre of Manchester and Salford," warning Liberals to beware of the fate of Mr. Kay in the latter borough, and imploring Conservatives to draw a lesson from the defeat of Mr. Powell in the former. Lewis mentioned that he had given notice to Hibbert of his intention to refer to the circumstances under which he pursued his candidature at Oldham. He regretted that that gentleman was not in his place, as he should like to have asked him whether he joined in the noble sentiments uttered by Forster, which echoed those spoken a short time ago by the leader of the Opposition.

Butt paid a warm tribute to the zeal, ability, and industry of Hicks-Beach as Chief Secretary; and what had been the result? Coercion. From the exceptional ability and firmness of the Chief Secretary coupled with the existing condition of Ireland, as he (Butt) described it, he drew the conclusion that the pacification of Ireland under existing circumstances was hopeless. As to the remarks about "terrorism," Butt pointed out that attempts to influence constituencies were not confined to adherents of Home Rule. Similar efforts were made by the advocates of the Permissive Bill, and of the Bill for the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister.

Hicks-Beach expressed, "for the third time," the firm and decided opposition of the Government to the proposal for Home Rule. They did not think it was a subject for consideration; they were not prepared to abide by the decision of a Committee, supposing it decided in favour of Home Rule; and they emphatically refused to submit to the investigation of a Committee a vital principle of the Constitution. Referring to Hibbert, who, he said, had pronounced at Oldham "the shameful shibboleth of Home Rule," he pointedly called upon Hartington, as the leader of the Opposition, to disown this procedure on the part of Liberal candidates, a procedure which he intimated had, in the case of Kay at Salford, been countenanced by two dis-

tinguished members of the Liberal party (Gladstone and Bright), whose duty it appeared to be to write letters of recommendation for Liberals out of place.

On the Chief Secretary resuming his seat, Gladstone rose and asked him to state what letter he referred to as having been written by him in support of Mr. Kay's candidature?

"I have it in my pocket, and will find it in a minute," he said, and commenced a hurried search amongst the bountiful contents of his pockets.

A long pause followed, which Fay attempted to fill up by addressing the House. But Hartington, finding the Chief Secretary was not prepared with the document, rose (it being a quarter to one in the morning) and commenced his speech, opposing the resolution in less heated but not less uncompromising terms than those used from the Treasury Bench.

On a division the numbers were 67 for Shaw's motion and 417 against.

Apr. 25.—A pointed inquiry. During a discussion on the Mutiny Bill and the use of the "cat" in the navy, Ward Hunt, who by exception happened not to be asleep on the Treasury bench, opposed a motion for the abolition of the instrument, on the ground that it was used only in cases of serious crimes. Parnell, who followed—as indeed he usually follows any speaker—pointed out, that among the offences for which the cat might be used, was that of a man sleeping at his post whilst on duty.

"Now, sir," said Parnell, "I should like to know whether the right hon. gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty regards *that* as a serious offence?"

Strangely enough, the House, usually quick to see a joke, did not notice this.

Apr. 26. — The Burials Bill in the Lords. The House of Lords presented an appearance different from that which usually obtains at six o'clock in the evening, when two or three elderly gentlemen may be observed scattered over the red benches, whilst one standing at the table addresses somebody opposite in conversational tone. The Chamber was, in fact, nearly three-quarters filled, whilst on the benches to the right of the Throne, the bishops—clad in robes of white—were clustered like a

bed of pure white lilies in a wilderness of worldliness. That model and treasured son of the Church, Lord Beaconsfield, was duly in his place, with arms folded and head bent down, as if he were listening to the curate of Hughenden.

It was evidently a field-day of some kind, and, in addition to this assemblage of noble lords, the occasion had drawn together some strangers, of whom two sat in the gallery to the left of the Lord Chancellor, and gazed with intensest interest upon the spectacle beneath. And well they might; for the strangers were the Chinese Envoys, and the assemblage below was the British House of Lords, engaged, upon the 26th April, 1877, in hearing arguments for and against the proposition that people who when alive did not agree with some other people as to the utility of bishops and the absolute necessity of deans, should, when they were dead, be buried, as one noble lord said, "like a suicide or one of the inferior animals."

Forty centuries looking down upon noble lords, gravely and even with some occasional flash of animation discoursing upon these matters, smiled knowingly at each other, even winked their almond eyes, and appeared to find the greatest delight in playfully poking in the ribs the intelligent interpreter who laboriously explained to them the phases of the debate. There was at the outset some difficulty with them, owing to a misapprehension of what they had come to see. There being in the Chinese language no term corresponding with "Burial Bill," the interpreter, in his efforts to explain what it was, had chiefly succeeded in conveying to their mind the impression that they were going to assist at a funeral. Accordingly, when they entered the House, and beheld the woolsack, they thought it was the coffin containing the body, and were much shocked to see a man in a wig sitting on it.

They determinately fixed on Cardwell as the chief mourner, and Selborne's melancholy manner convinced them that he must, at least, be a near relation of the departed. The bishops they regarded as a choir of elderly boys, and when the Archbishop of Canterbury rose to join in the debate they expressed themselves much disappointed at the monotonous tone of his chant. But at length they were made to understand the facts of the case, and thereupon commenced those indications of amusement and those somewhat insolent demonstrations of superiority over the outer

barbarian alluded to. I should like to see the letters they will write home to-morrow describing the debate they have witnessed to-night.

Apr. 28.—A lament for the lost leader.

It is no use any longer holding back the confession that the House of Commons is growing insufferably dull. We meet at the usual hour, and go home after the customary squabble. But between the coming and the going there lies an arid waste of purposeless talk, which only on the rarest occasions rises to the level of sustained and animated speech. It has come to pass that the principal personages in the House are Messrs. Biggar and Parnell, and that unless Whalley comes to our assistance there are no means of raising the ghost of the merry laughter that erewhile used to ring through the chamber. It is the same House of Commons, and, in a great measure, it is filled by the same men. But the difference between the House this Session and all former Sessions that I have known is that which lies between a prospect of vale and hill and field and river when the sun is shining brightly upon it, and the same stretch of landscape under dull dun skies.

How does this come about? Has the sun really ceased to shine, or is there some subtle change in the landscape? I think both influences are at work, but, primarily, the going down of the sun is answerable for what we lament. It is impossible to withstand the conviction that the removal of Disraeli to the House of Lords has let down the House of Commons by several distinct stages. It was not always that Disraeli was brilliant himself. In truth, latterly he had grown a trifle dull; but he possessed the charm marked under another phase in another great man. He was not only brilliant himself, but was the cause of brilliancy in others. He wound up the House of Commons to a certain pitch, at which it was constantly kept going. His mere presence supplied a focus towards which the minds of speakers were bent. A man, as Wilfrid Lawson well knew, could raise a laugh at the poorest joke if he pointed it with the name of the Premier.

Then you never knew when you had Disraeli—or, to speak more exactly, when you had him not. If he did not speak, there was the certainty throughout a debate that he might

speak, and the House was held together in anticipation of the event. If a debate were dying of inanition, Disraeli had the happy gift of rousing it to the highest pitch of excitement by the interposition of a few words.

I remember one summer evening in the early days of the Parliament, when about twenty members were dozing under a soul-depressing discussion on the incidence of local taxation, Bright, then freshly emerged from his retirement, unexpectedly said a few words of no particular moment. Disraeli was sitting on the Treasury bench in his stolidly-patient but always watchful manner, and, when Bright sat down, he, pulling himself together by a shake of the shoulders, rose, and forthwith fell, tooth-and-nail, upon the momentarily inoffensive tribune. There was no reason for it except that the long unfamiliar sound of Bright's voice, and his presence on the opposite bench, had roused in his mind the slumbering memories of fierce conflicts long passed, and it occurred to him that he would try whether his strength had failed or his skill in attack grown rusty. The empty House rapidly filled as the news of the duel went round, and, local taxation and everything else forgotten in the pleasure of the moment, the gratified Commons gave themselves up to the delight of witnessing an encounter that realised in some measure for the present generation the battles of which they had read in history.

This motive of uncertainty is now removed, and for the brilliant dash of the uncertain and cynical Premier, we have the matter-of-fact, business-like, even common-place Chancellor of the Exchequer. The House of Commons is invariably, for the time being, what its leader is. Members sing on the keynote he strikes, and dance to the measure he plays. Here, again, a peculiarity, marked in Disraeli, is, in its directly opposite manifestation, observable in Stafford Northcote. He is not only dull himself, but he is the cause of dulness in others. Under Disraeli's *régime*, men in opposition struck at the stars, and at least came near to striking the roof of the houses. Under the Chancellor of the Exchequer it seems sufficient to strike at the top of the houses, with the result that we find ourselves fumbling about the first-floor window.

With the exceptions of Hartington, and at the other end of the stick, A. M. Sullivan, who have both distinctly improved,

no prominent speaker acquits himself so well as he was wont to do when Disraeli was yet leader of the House. Perhaps a third exception should be made in favour of Goschen, who grows more sprightly as a speaker, notwithstanding his habitude of anchoring himself, as it were, during his speeches, by studiously keeping the backs of his legs glued to the bench from which he has risen. But, beyond this, exception may not be made. Gladstone occasionally makes great speeches, and now and then puts his mighty steam-engine force into motion, in order to kill such butterflies of debate as Chaplin or George Hamilton. But he lacks the sustained and balancing impetus the presence of Disraeli supplied him with. Bright withdraws himself more and more from participation in debate, and the field is thus kept clear for the self-conceited verbosity of Knatchbull-Hugessen, the sentimental sermonising of Stansfeld, and for the growth in Shaw-Lefevre's mind of the conviction that he was born for greater things than the destiny which, in its partial fulfilment, has left an indelible stamp upon the Admiralty.

Perhaps no individual member has suffered so much as Harcourt. Basking in the reflected light of Disraeli, Sir William was frequently sparkling, sometimes even brilliant. He is now neither, and when he would be severe grows noisy, and when he would be witty is only rude.

These are individual instances which might be indefinitely extended. They are simply illustrations of the state of affairs which every man in the House feels more fully than he can explain, and by which an assembly that contains within itself more of eloquence, knowledge, wit, humour, and good-breeding than any other in the world, has become just now a dull and stagnant pond, which receives its only and occasional motion from the breath of a Biggar and a Parnell, the vagaries of a Whalley, and the demonstrations of a De Morgan.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MR. GLADSTONE'S FIVE RESOLUTIONS.

Mr. Gladstone's Resolutions on the Eastern Question—A Fight over Mr. Biggar's Body—Division in the Liberal Ranks—Mr. Gladstone's Resolutions—Second Night of the Debate—Sir John Holker—Third Night—Fourth Night—The Division—The Pomatum-Pot—Another *Mot* by Mr. Lowe.

Apr. 30. — Mr. Gladstone's resolutions on the Eastern Question. Gladstone gave notice of his intention to move a series of five resolutions bearing on the Eastern Question. Their general purport points to an expression of opinion on the part of the House of Commons of dissatisfaction with the conduct of the Ottoman Porte, and includes a declaration that until guarantees on behalf of the subject populations of the Porte are forthcoming, Turkey will be deemed to have lost all claim to receive either the material or moral support of the British Crown. The reading of the resolutions was received with partial cheering from the Opposition benches.

Gladstone proposed to put these resolutions down in the form of an amendment on going into Committee of Supply on Friday next, whilst he hinted that he would gladly accept any proposal the leader of the House might make to give a Government night. Stafford Northcote promptly acceded to this suggestion, and fixed Monday for the debate. After a brief pause Lubbock gave notice that on the resolutions being brought forward he will move the previous question.

This movement on the part of Gladstone has greatly angered the Liberals, more particularly the section below the gangway. Wilfrid Lawson has made a rhymed paraphrase of the resolutions, which is passed about the benches.

No. 1.

Resolved that this House is uncommonly vexed,
Annoyed and disgusted, displeased and perplexed,
At finding no hangings have yet taken place,
When Lord Derby declared that such should be the case.

No. 2.

That till somebody's hanged—it don't matter much who—
With the Turks we'll have nothing whatever to do.

No. 3.

Autonomy is, after all, the real thing,
Without any foreign dictator or king.

No. 4.

The Protocols signed about Greece, long ago,
Are the very best things of the kind that I know;
Let the Powers united now take the same course.
If the Turks should refuse, why, then take it by force;

And let us in our might—the Wise Men of the West—
Exact from the Moslem just what we think best.
Thus, somehow we'll manage, e'er flags shall be furled,
To have done a great stroke for "the peace of the world!"

No. 5.

When all this has been passed, 'twill be well, I should guess,
On a post-card to write out a "humble address:"
Which will seem, when it reaches the hands of the Queen,
The most wonderful thing which she ever has seen!

May 1.—A fight
over Mr. Big-
gar's body.

The question of the appointment of the Cattle
Plague Committee has come up to-night, the
bone (and meat) of contention being whether
Biggar shall or shall not be appointed a member of the Com-
mittee. The Home Rulers, meeting in secret conclave, have—
not without suspicion that they desire wilfully to offend the
House—nominated Biggar as their representative on this Com-
mittee. Their cry is "Biggar, or no Committee," the House
answering with the defiance, "No Committee rather than Big-
gar." Thus the hosts are ranged, and the fight commences.

It began about nine o'clock, after an evening throughout
which peace and amity had reigned in unmeasured bounds.
Everybody had got everything they wanted except Alderman
McArthur, whose mighty mind, ranging as far as Ceylon, had
claimed justice for Buddhists, Hindoos, and Mahommedans as
against their Anglican and Presbyterian brethren in the island.
Lowther, who was led to regard the grievances in a mercenary
light, rapidly did a sum, in which he showed that the Buddhists,
Hindoos, and Mahommedans did not contribute towards the

religious comfort of their Presbyterian and Anglican brethren more than a penny per head per year, which Lowther thought was scarcely worth while talking about.

After this everything was conceded, and the business was so rapidly got through that poor Whalley, who had been studying precedents in the Library with intent to call attention to the petition of The De Morgan, was thrown out of his reckoning, and missed a great chance of occupying a whole evening. It was sad to see the grey-haired knight-errant walk into the House about two minutes after his name had been called, and when Cross had stepped into the vacant place with his motion to make new bishops. Whalley had a formidable volume under one arm, and a roll of papers in the other hand. As he crossed the bar, he comprehended at a glance all that had happened. A foreign influence had been at work, and had excited the House to get through its business with unnatural celerity, in order that his chance might be overthrown. An angry man would have scolded. An excitable man would have rushed wildly about the House. Whalley did neither. He walked in calmly, with a dignified, if sorrowful, mien, every step a reproach, every rustle of his manifold memoranda a rebuke. So he sat down on the front Opposition bench with a noble, quiet sadness that touched every heart, and hushed the irreverent, mocking cheer that half rose as he entered.

The battle for the body commenced, as sanguinary conflicts often do, quietly enough. The motion was to nominate twenty-three members on the Committee. The number being objected to as inadequate, William Dyke announced the readiness of the Government to make the Committee twenty-seven, doing so in a brief but sprightly speech, which shows how good a debater the House loses since Dyke is content to perform the laborious duties of chief Ministerial whip. For some time the question of Biggar being added to the Committee was kept in the background, members manœuvring with great skill to avoid a direct reference to him. But somebody on the Conservative benches blurted out the announcement that he, for one, would not, under any circumstances, consent to Biggar being on the Committee. Thus the storm burst forth and the ranks closed up.

Then it was that the Major presented himself and was welcomed with shouts from both sides. Since the Major's return

after an illness, during which two nations watched by his bedside, he has held himself comparatively retired from the conduct of public business. To-night, in accordance with this policy, he was seated under the gallery, and was heard long before he was seen. But there was no mistaking the voice, and all eyes were turned to the dim recess below the gallery, when the thunderous "Mr. Speaker" broke forth and dominated the trembling air. Standing there, as it were framed between the pillars which mark the gallery off in sections of one-fifth, the Major appeared, the personification of war.

He had just dropped in after dinner, and had learned that the worst fears of Ireland were realised, and that a ruthless Saxon Parliament was positively objecting to Biggar! His hair was ruffled, his eyes gleamed with the light of battle, his mouth twitched with a magnificent passion, and his shirt-front was menacingly rumpled. If you have ever seen a game-cock approaching the enemy, with crest erect, and the feathers round his neck ruffled, you might get some faint idea of what the Major looked like under the gallery. His speech was short but to the point.

"Mr. Speaker," he roared, "we will oppose every name on the Committee;" which said, he sat down, and the House felt that the sword was drawn, and the scabbard thrown away.

All this while Biggar, with his elbow on the back of the bench, his face turned towards the Treasury bench, sat with a pleased smile watching the varying fortunes of the fray. Something like a blush overspread his ingenuous countenance, and he dropped his head, when Butt made an impassioned appeal to the embattled hosts to pause before they committed the great wrong threatened. Butt, to tell the truth, rather hinted that Biggar was not all he should be. But if he had done wrong, let Troy do right. Was it dignified, was it just, was it worthy of the House of Commons, that they should ostracise Biggar because he had in some respects fallen short of the docility of an average member?

The blush burned deeper and deeper on the countenance of Biggar; the hard lines about his mouth softened; the gleaming eye grew moist, and something like a sob struggled within his breast. I have no doubt that if, at that moment, Hicks-Beach had crossed the floor of the House, had taken Biggar in his arms

and kissed him on the forehead, a permanent reconciliation would have been effected. But the Chief Secretary for Ireland sat gloomily and scornfully silent. The House answered Butt with an ironical cheer; the soft light died away from the face of Biggar; and once more there was presented to the assembled House the spectacle of the member for Cavan, with elbow on the back of the bench, face turned towards the Treasury bench, and tearless eyes, watching, with intensest satisfaction, the growing tumult.

The Major, who had been stretching his legs in the lobby, now returned, and feeling that his proper place was in the fore-front of the battle, carefully descended the steps of the gangway, and took up his seat on the front bench below the gangway, occupying the space usually filled by the combined occupation of Dilke, Dilwyn, and Bass. Here he sat, with his shirt-front increasingly rumpled, looking more than ever like a game-cock elated with the consciousness of its spurs. Presently he rose, standing well out on the floor of the House, and made another speech, a little longer than the first. Somebody on the opposite side had been arguing the matter, and he thought the time was come when the mockery of argument should be demolished, and the issue placed on its true basis. To that end the Major addressed the Speaker.

"Sir," he thunderingly said, "let the hon. member make his mind quite easy. We object to the hon. member for Cheshire. That is all."

And he sat down again, feeling that he had, in Parliamentary phrase, "recalled the House to a recollection of the question immediately before it."

Parnell was now up, pale with passion at some supposititious reference to the circumstance that when Biggar was not settling the affairs of the nation at Westminster, he was engaged in the provision line in Belfast. Nobody had made any reference of the kind indicated, for, with exceedingly few exceptions, the House of Commons is composed of gentlemen. But it pleased Parnell to suppose the existence of the petty rudeness, and here he was, with hands clenched, teeth set, and face lividly pale, hissing out rebuke for an imaginary misdemeanour.

All this while Biggar sat silent, undisguisedly betraying the keenest interest in what was going on. In the House of

Commons it is a rule, scarcely requiring formula, that when a gentleman is personally under discussion he should relieve the House of the embarrassment of his presence. This was a view of his duty Biggar did not take. It seemed to him that, as he was being somewhat frankly discussed, no one had a better right to listen to what was going on than himself. So he sat there through it all, and when a division was called on the question whether Mr. Biggar should or should not be added to the Committee, he calmly rose, and, walking out, voted for himself.

May 2.—Division
in the Liberal
ranks.

The division as to Gladstone's resolutions runs through all the ranks of the Liberal party. Many think it is a split between the Radicals and the Whigs, but this is far from being the case. Twenty members of Parliament, being also members of the Radical Club, are likely to vote in the division, and of these at least six will vote with Hartington and against Gladstone. On the other hand, the following Whigs will support Gladstone and oppose Hartington:—Thomas Acland, Leveson-Gower, Howard, Hibbert, Shaw-Lefevre, Millbank, Lord Arthur Russell, Sir Dudley Marjoribanks, Pendarves Vivian, Hussey Vivian, and Adolphus Young. According to the latest estimate, Gladstone will have a following of from 90 to 100. A list I have seen in competent hands shows 89 names of men certain to vote with him. An additional seven are marked as friendly, but wavering.

The question what will become of the Liberal party after the debate and division has been occupying much attention. Perhaps it would be better to wait till the debate is over, and see whether there is any party left to care for. I understand that Gladstone is prepared to speak for four hours, and if others speak in proportion, it is not likely that there will be many survivors on the benches of the House.

Amid the hubbub it is generally agreed that it would be more decorous if Harcourt did not quite so loudly utter his reprobation of Gladstone's conduct. If Sir William forgets that it was Gladstone who took him from below the gangway and made him a knight, other people have better memories.

May 7.—Mr. Gladstone's resolutions. It is said that the anticipatory interest shown in the debate on Gladstone's resolutions to-night was greater than has been witnessed in the same place for the last ten years. However that be, it is certain that the House of Commons could not have been fuller. Members were early in attendance, and long before four o'clock every seat on the floor of the House was occupied. Thence members overflowed into the galleries, taking by preference that to the right of the Speaker, which would bring them face to face with the orator of the evening. These seats filled, those in the opposite gallery were taken up, and there being yet candidates for places, members were found clustering in groups at the open doorways, or sitting on the steps of the various gangways.

That the Strangers' and Speaker's Galleries were filled goes without saying. But it may be added as an indication of the interest shown on the occasion, that upwards of 400 balloted for the 80 seats which the Strangers' Gallery provides. The Peers mustered in large force, crowding the space allotted to them. Wolverton obtained the place of honour over the clock, Granville being content with one lower down. Amongst the distinguished strangers present was Prince Louis Napoleon, who watched with great interest the animated scene which preluded the speech of the evening.

Gladstone came in at twenty-five minutes to five, looking hot and flurried, possibly with the effort of making his way through the great crowd that had gathered outside, the sound of whose ringing cheer as he appeared was heard within the precincts of the House. He entered whilst Lord Sandon was answering a question, and being unobserved, there was no demonstration. The questions, comparatively few in number, were put and answered amid a buzz of conversation, which rendered them almost inaudible. When the list was exhausted Newdegate rose to ask whether the Government were prepared to move for or to support a Committee to consider the conduct of business of the House, and was shortly answered in the negative by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Then Trevelyan rose from a seat far below the gangway, and intimating his intention of addressing a question to Gladstone, the buzz of conversation ceased, and the House became suddenly attentive.

What Trevelyan had to ask was whether Gladstone had any

objection to substitute for his second resolution words to the following effect:—"That this House is of opinion that the Porte, by its conduct towards its subject populations, and by its refusal to give guarantees for their better government, has forfeited all claim to receive either the material or the moral support of the British Crown." The intimation of intention to put the question was greeted with loud laughter by the Ministerialists, who had been prepared by rumour for a change in the programme of the evening. The merriment broke out afresh when Trevelyan went on to ask whether Gladstone would refrain from moving his third and fourth resolutions.

Gladstone, on rising to reply, was greeted with loud cheers by the Opposition. He agreed to the first part of the suggestion made to him by Trevelyan, and was generally understood to intimate his acquiescence in the latter part. Hartington in a few words expressed his approval of the course now taken, and advised Lubbock not to persevere with the motion of the previous question which stood in his name.

When Hartington resumed his seat, amid cheers from the Opposition and laughter from the Ministerial benches, Percy Wyndham, Greene, and Lubbock rose together. After a brief contest the two former gave way, and Lubbock had an opportunity of stating that the acceptance by Gladstone of Trevelyan's suggestion removed his former objection, and that he therefore should not move the amendment of which he had given notice; whereat the Ministerialists again loudly laughed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer reviewed in detail the course of events leading up to this conclusion, which he said placed the House in a peculiar, not to say undignified position. He concluded by moving that the orders of the day be postponed until after the debate on Gladstone's resolutions.

As he resumed his seat Greene and Percy Wyndham rose again, now finding a competitor in Bentinck. Gladstone had also risen, and stood at the table waiting an opportunity of speaking. This no one of the three gentlemen on the Conservative side was inclined to give him, and there was presented to the House the rare spectacle of four gentlemen on their feet at the same moment. Greene gave way first, and then there followed between Bentinck and Percy Wyndham a mutual interchange of courtesy in the way of rising and sitting which was

watched with uproarious laughter. Wyndham stood just behind Bentinck on the floor of the House, and sometimes Wyndham made signs of resuming his seat when Bentinck began to speak, and next, Bentinck, momentarily giving way, half sat down, whereupon Wyndham promptly jumped up and claimed the attention of the House, seeing which Bentinck rose again and insisted upon his turn.

All this time the House was shouting with laughter, and Gladstone, looking extremely pale, was standing at the table. Wyndham having finally managed to convey to the Speaker an intimation that he rose to a point of order, Gladstone at once gave way. But as soon as he spoke, and it became clear that he was not addressing himself to a point of order, he was put down by the Speaker, whereupon Bentinck, finding his opportunity, imperturbably rose again, amid a fresh burst of laughter. Percy Wyndham also made another attempt to engage the attention of the House, which Chaplin assisted by laying his hand on Bentinck's collar and forcibly retaining him in his seat. Percy Wyndham finally subsiding, Gladstone rose again, whereupon Bentinck insisted upon his right of precedence, and in despite of Chaplin, amid uncontrollable laughter, slowly rose with a piece of paper in one hand and a stick in the other, and attempted to make a speech.

After some moments' further struggling Gladstone was allowed to commence. Speaking in a manner which indicated suppressed feeling, he repudiated the suggestion made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he might, towards the end of his speech, do something which he had said at the opening he would not do. That was an assertion, Gladstone declared, amid cheers from the Opposition and cries of "No" from the Ministerialists, which went beyond the courtesy of debate. Gladstone continued to speak under great disadvantage amid interruptions from the opposite benches of a character somewhat unusual when a distinguished member of the House is addressing the chair. He was frequently stopped by laughter, cries of "Oh," and shouts of "Motion, motion." Attempting to refer to the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in support of his argument, he was called to order by Roebuck, and abruptly concluded.

Bentinck, who all this time had been on the look-out for an opening, now rose, amid renewed laughter, and opposed the

motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a course in which he was supported by Greene and Chaplin, the latter of whom warmly characterised Gladstone's procedure as "childish vacillation of purpose." Gathorne Hardy, who spoke with a warmth that finally drew down upon him the rebuke of the Speaker, hoped that this objection would not be persisted in.

"Whatever Mr. Gladstone wanted to say, let him say it and make an end of it."

Percy Wyndham now rose again, and made some observations amid cries of "Agreed." Courtney, rising from the Opposition benches, was greeted with deprecatory cries from the Ministerialists; but when it appeared that he was about to take objection to Gladstone's course, he was listened to with marked attention, and was even cheered. Chamberlain received an equally favourable reception from the Ministerialists when he invited Gladstone to state definitely whether he still intended to move the third and fourth resolutions. After some further conversation, Stafford Northcote suggested that Drummond Wolff should substitute for the amendment of which he had given notice, one to the effect that the House declines to pass any resolution impugning the policy of Her Majesty's Government, unless accompanied by the statement of an alternative policy. Bentinck rose again, and was met with a perfect storm of cries of "Spoke! spoke!" amid which, after a sturdy but hopeless resistance, he resumed his seat.

Sullivan characterised the proceedings on the Opposition benches as a fatal attempt to change front in the face of the enemy, and further as an endeavour to reconstruct the Liberal party on the floor of the House of Commons. Dillwyn moved the adjournment of the debate in order that Gladstone, who had already spoken, might have an opportunity of answering the question as to his intention which had been frequently pressed upon him. Gladstone explained that on Friday, when he found that the Government were not prepared to meet his resolutions by a direct vote of confidence, he had been taken utterly by surprise. He had come down later in the evening prepared to make a statement on the subject, but was prevented by the House being counted out.

Eventually, Stafford Northcote's motion was put from the chair, and being challenged by a solitary voice below the

gangway, the House was cleared for a division. But on the question being put again, the voice did not respond, and the motion was declared carried.

It was seven o'clock, two hours having been occupied in this preliminary discussion, when Gladstone rose to move his first resolution, being greeted with loud cheers from the Opposition benches. He spoke for exactly two hours and a half, keeping the House well together, notwithstanding the unforeseen discussion which had brought the delivery of his speech within the dinner hour. His chief contention, supported by many quotations from the Blue-books, was that a day of peace would never dawn for the East until united action had been taken by the Powers of Europe for rendering justice to the Christian subjects of Turkey. His main complaint was, that whenever the Government had seemed to concur in promoting such united action, they had always done it under circumstances which made the acceptance of their proposals impossible. Amid loud cheers he declared his belief that the knell of Turkish tyranny had sounded, and that, come through whom or by what hands it might, the final destruction of that tyranny would be equally welcomed by Christendom and by the world.

He resumed his seat amid cheers which lasted for several minutes, the Speaker meanwhile standing waiting formally to submit the first of the series of resolutions.

Wolff moved an amendment in the sense of that suggested by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Chamberlain defended the resolutions from the charge of being inopportune. Cross taunted Gladstone with fighting shy of the real question, which underlay his appeals in behalf of the Christian subjects of Turkey. Was he prepared to go to war with Russia against Turkey? That, Cross declared amid loud cheers from the Ministerialists, was the real question, and it was one which Gladstone had carefully refrained from answering. At a quarter past twelve Childers moved the adjournment of the debate.

May 8. — Second
night of the
debate.

The House to-night presented its ordinary appearance, the excitement of the previous night appearing to have evaporated after Gladstone's speech. The attendance of Ministers and ex-Ministers was con-

siderable, but there were large gaps on the back benches. The only parts of the House where the interest appeared to be kept up was in the Strangers' and Speaker's Galleries, which were crowded. Gladstone entered shortly after business commenced, and remained in attendance throughout the greater portion of the sitting, an example not followed by any other Minister or ex-Minister, except the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The questions on the paper being disposed of, including one by Whalley referring to "the secret operations of a dangerous organisation," Sullivan asked a series of questions, designed to obtain from the Chancellor of the Exchequer more detailed information as to the statements made by the Home Secretary on the previous night of the determination of Great Britain to defend Egypt. The Speaker, interposing, pointed out that the questions were not of a character that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was bound to answer. It was a subject which should be brought forward in the form of a notice of motion. Stafford Northcote, on rising, was received with loud cries of "No, no," from the Ministerialists; but he nevertheless acknowledged the question to the extent of saying that it was one he could not answer.

Childers rose to resume the debate on Gladstone's resolutions. He was much cheered from the Opposition side when, in his opening remarks, he characterised Gladstone's speech of the previous evening as one of the noblest efforts ever made in the House of Commons. He was proceeding to call attention to the varying reception which portions of Cross's speech had received from the Ministerialists, when Plunket rose to order, and asked the Speaker's opinion whether Childers was in order in referring to past debates of the Session. The Speaker pointed out that Childers was referring to a current debate, and was therefore perfectly in order. Childers strongly supported Gladstone's resolutions, and was followed by Sandon, who, repeating Cross's main argument of the previous night, insisted that Gladstone's resolutions meant war against Turkey in alliance with Russia; and he asked the House whether it was worth while to engage upon such a war in order to appoint for the term of five years new governors for the Christian provinces of Turkey? The debate was continued in a thin House by Percy Wyndham, Hussey Vivian, and Baillie Cochrane.

Baxter, drawing upon his experience during a tour in Turkey, declared that he had not been able to agree with the second of Gladstone's original resolutions, which appeared to promise that if guarantees for better government were forthcoming the moral or material aid of England should not be withheld from the Porte. For his part he was for taking firm and decided steps to get rid of all engagements with a corrupt, promise-breaking, and tottering Power. He was strongly averse to coercion in any form. Eslington severely lectured the Opposition on their persistent attacks upon the foreign policy of the Government. Roebuck, who still addresses the House from the Liberal side, suggested that Gladstone was no longer worthy of the respect of members, and amid loud cheers from the opposite benches declared that the time would come when the country would acknowledge how good and wise were the present Government. After some words from the Attorney-General, Lowe traced the existing state of affairs to "the constant mistakes, the useless concealment, and the unnecessary swaggering and bravado of the Ministry."

Shortly before midnight John Manners rose amid the noise of the bustling departure of gentlemen from both sides of the House, and in behalf of the Government replied on the few points raised throughout the evening's debate. On the motion of Mundella, the debate was adjourned. Biggar then proceeded to address the House at some length in connection with the transfer of the licence of a publican in the county of Antrim.

Sir John Holker. A painter would have found in to-night's proceedings a subject for a panel that would have shown, better than a volume could indicate, the great change that has come over Gladstone's Parliamentary position. If, six years ago, any one had been asked to realise a scene in which Sir John Holker should, in the midst of an applauding senate, have twitted, bantered, and even lectured Gladstone, he would have stumbled over an initial difficulty. In those days it would have been impossible for a man who ate and slept well, took regular exercise, and thus eschewed nightmare, to imagine such a thing as Holker being Attorney-General.

How the promotion came about is of no consequence at this time of day. Sir John Holker, as Attorney-General, is a fact of

which we are occasionally reminded by finding a stout, big-framed gentleman standing at the table, and addressing the House in a voice which appears located further down in the human frame than is customary, and which is pumped up by machinery that does not always work smoothly.

Last night, Gladstone, whilst discussing the Eastern policy of Her Majesty's Government, accidentally happened to observe the Attorney-General opposite. He had just entered after dinner, and was in an amiable frame of mind. He sat there, with a hand half hid in either trouser-pocket, and toothsome dallied with a tooth-pick. Nothing appeared more remote from probability than that he should become the centre of interest. He knew nothing about the Eastern Question, and, to do him justice, had not affected information. He had dined leisurely and well, and the cerulean blue of an unexpectedly prosperous life was momentarily clouded by the necessity imposed upon him of being in his place in prospect of a certain division.

Perhaps there was something in his stolidly comfortable aspect that aggravated Gladstone, himself raging with holy passion. It is well known to readers of history that whenever Mrs. MacStinger was disturbed by family woes, she invariably seized upon her youngest child, if it happened to be within reach, and, without preface, administered severe corporeal punishment, subsequently seating it on the cool pavement. Without suggesting any parallel between Gladstone and Captain Cuttle's dreaded landlady, it must be admitted that there were established points of parallel between Sir John Holker and that youthful sacrificial lamb, Alexander MacStinger. Turning aside with an angry flash from the line of argument he had been following, Gladstone suddenly dropped on the unsuspecting Attorney-General, and with no other preface than the exclamation, "There sits the Attorney-General," buffeted him with quotations from a speech delivered by him to his constituents some months ago.

Holker sat transfixed under the terrible forefinger pointed straight at him. His hands slowly descended to the depths of his pocket, the tooth-pick fell out of his guilty mouth, and he began to think that the Attorney-Generalship had its inconveniences as well as its salary.

He said nothing last night; but here he is to-night, with his voice brought up from lower depths than ever, and with altogether unexpected inflexions in his marvellous intonation. He is heavily humorous, and the Ministerialists, always ready to dance when a Minister pipes, burst forth into an encouraging roar of laughter; he is severe, and a ringing cheer from behind sends home the dulled barb of his rebuke; he is nobly generous, and gentlemen from the shires have an uneasy consciousness that he is "letting Gladstone off too easily." But for Gladstone this last must surely be the hardest thing to bear. A man may sleep after having been rebuked by Sir John Holker; to be heavily chaffed by him is amusing; but to be praised by him must have caused Gladstone seriously to consider his past life, and rigorously question himself as to what he had done that he should have to bear this.

One need not go far back in his career to find what he had done, to bring down upon himself this absurd castigation. To find Gladstone openly scoffed at in the House of Commons, his voice drowned in murmurs led by gentlemen of the intellectual calibre of Sir William Fraser, to hear him scolded by Chaplin, and to witness him patronised by Holker, is a state of things painful to men of right feeling, on whichever side of the House they sit. But it must be admitted that Gladstone is himself wholly to blame for its existence. None but he could have undermined and hopelessly blown up a personal position, established by a long career unparalleled in English history for brilliancy and substantial achievement. If he had only a tenth part of the imperturbability of Hartington, or, remembering the chilly haughty manner of his old master Sir Robert Peel, could in some measure imitate it, he would be not less strong in the House of Commons now than he was when he stood at the head of a devoted majority. If, owing to an emotional, not to say a nitro-glycerinic temperament, this be impossible, would he only leave the House when gentlemen opposite are discussing his speeches, something of the desired effect might be attained.

But as he is pretty constant in his attendance, never sleeps on the front Opposition bench, and is able to follow a debate even whilst he is writing letters, the consequences are disastrous.

There is not a dull-witted or malicious man on either side of the House who is not able to stir him up, and set him either excitedly shaking his head or bring him to his feet with a contradiction or an explanation. Every one who hears the remark knows that it is not of the slightest consequence until it is endowed with the importance of notice having been taken of it by Gladstone.

Quite apart from the strong feeling of personal hatred of Gladstone which pervades some sections of the Conservative benches, and which prompts small minds to torture a great one, there is another reason why some members should go out of their way to make pointed personal references to the ex-Premier. If they went their ordinary way, stumbling through the utterances of their commonplaces, neither the House nor the reporters would take notice of them. But if they can succeed in eliciting an interruption from Gladstone, the attention of the House and of the reporters is at once fixed upon them, and their name goes forth linked with that of the member for Greenwich. If Gladstone would only remember these things!

May 10. — Third night. On the eve of most great party divisions in the House of Commons, a stranger may be observed rapidly pacing the stone pavement of Westminster Hall. His age may be fifty-five, but he does not look as if more than fifty years had passed over his head—years which had for the most part been summers. He is of full height, and wears his hat well set on one side of his head. His coat was evidently made in Paris, and there, too, must that abundant moustache have been trimmed and waxed. On the whole, it would not be easy to guess the stranger's nationality or his profession. He might be a *chef de cuisine* of the higher grade. He might be a French colonel in mufti. He might be the ring-master from the neighbouring circus of Sanger. He might be anything but what he is—the son of one of the greatest of English statesmen, and an actual member of Parliament for a quiet, not to say obscure, English borough constituency.

Sir Robert Peel is the stormy petrel of the Parliamentary session. He never appears except when a great party division is imminent, and then he may be counted upon always to vote

the right way, and sometimes to make a speech. The House welcomed him to-night with an applauding shout when he rose from the familiar seat on the back bench below the gangway, and began to pose. Although the debate of the evening has been of a higher class than that of Tuesday, it has not been exhilarating. Courtney, who opened the discussion, recited an able lecture on foreign policy in a manner which marked a considerable advance upon his earlier Parliamentary utterances. Chaplin emphatically delivered a stream of platitudes, varied by some stirring references to the possible necessity of sweeping the Mediterranean with British guns; whereat Sir William Edmonstone raked the Opposition fore and aft with cheers, and if at the moment he could have caught the Speaker's eye, would forthwith have related that thrilling story of how he once quelled a mutiny in the same blue waters. Chaplin had spoken so loudly, and had been so warmly cheered by members who are always ready to join in the chorus of "Rule, Britannia," that when he sat down and mopped his forehead, there evidently came back the familiar and troublous thought whether he was doing his duty to his country in giving up to Newmarket what was meant for Great Britain.

After this, the House went off to dinner, leaving Mitchell-Henry to address posterity through an imaginary official reporter. The House remained empty for two hours, the latter half of which period was weighted by a great fear. Shaw-Lefevre was sitting, the solitary tenant of the front Opposition bench, evidently waiting an opportunity to speak. He rose several times, but always the Speaker, who feels that the line must be drawn somewhere, saw somebody else. Shaw-Lefevre on the Eastern Question would be too much even in a debate to which four mortal nights had been given up. It was a relief to find Forster lurching in at ten o'clock, for it was known that it had been arranged that he should speak, and so Shaw-Lefevre's chance was gone. Forster disposed his elegant form on the bench, and with head laid back and legs stretched far out towards the Treasury bench, by way of showing Her Majesty's Ministers that he bore no malice, listened to the vapoury eloquence of Peel.

The baronet was in great force to-night, blowing out his cheeks as if he were practising for an engagement in the trom-

bone department of the orchestra at the Wagner Festival, and shaking his outstretched hand in a manner that threatened imminent destruction to Storer's hat. The occupants of the Strangers' Gallery were in ecstasies. Never had they seen anything like this in the House of Commons, whilst members, more particularly on the Conservative benches, kept time to Peel's thunder with peals of laughter. How exquisite the irony! how scathing the sarcasm! how rich the humour of the right hon. baronet! The success of George Colman, who, when he asked his neighbour at dinner to pass the salt, found that he had set the table in a roar of laughter, is the best illustration that occurs of the triumph of Sir Robert Peel's speech to-night.

"The right hon. gentleman, the member for the London University—I will come to him presently," Sir Robert added, wagging his head and hand; and the House incontinently roared with laughter.

"Mr. Lowe said that two lawyers had addressed the House, and had treated it like a common jury. Well, I hope he never will have to appear before a common jury."

Gracious powers! how we laughed and cheered! Was there ever anything so funny as this?

"After having spoken a little on different subjects, Earl Granville brought out of his arsenal that fine old English gentleman—civil and religious liberty."

"Mr. Lowe an ex-Cabinet Minister—he may, perhaps, by some accident, occupy the same position again, though I hope he will not."

Laughter again, almost to the verge of convulsions!

More than ever the impression grows that for sparkling wit and abundant humour the House of Commons contains no one who can compete with the baronet who represents Tamworth. In the more serious portion of his speech, it is true, Sir Robert was not quite so successful, having as much difficulty in dragging in his cherished reference to the departure of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt as Moses had in getting them out.

When I hear Peel speak I think of what Dr. Johnson said about Colley Cibber: "As for Cibber himself, taking from his conversation all that he ought not to have said, he was a poor creature."

May 11.—Fourth night. Gladstone appeared at the table of the House of Commons to-day before the hour of public business had struck, and presented a petition in favour of his resolutions, signed by sixty-three out of eighty fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge. Questions disposed of, the Chancellor of the Exchequer repeated the now familiar motion of the postponement of the orders of the day till after the discussion on Gladstone's resolutions. Edward Jenkins seized the opportunity to express the hope that the Government would not insist upon taking the division at the conclusion of that night's debate, but would consent to a further adjournment till Monday. Jenkins observed that he had himself risen many times during the previous evening, hoping to catch the Speaker's eye, and that within his knowledge there were a great many members who desired to address the House on the subject. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, promptly interposing, expressed the hope that the debate would be concluded that night; but in any case he deprecated waste of time in discussion of the question raised by Jenkins. On the part of the Government, he undertook that its members would not occupy the time of the House further than was necessary for the delivery of the speeches of Bourke and himself.

Walter suggested, amid general cheering, that the difficulty might be met by members making their speeches shorter. Anderson complained that opinion in the House had not been fairly represented in the debate, as during the three nights only two members, who were supporters of Gladstone in his resolutions as they originally stood, had found an opportunity of speaking. After some words from Gladstone and Hartington, the latter expressing his hope that the debate might be concluded that night, Bourke rose and resumed the discussion.

The House had not hitherto been crowded; but now it was further reduced by the prompt departure of a large number of members, Bourke at the outset with difficulty making himself heard amidst the noise and bustle. The Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs dealt largely with the literature of the Blue Books, endeavouring to show by quotations from despatches that the Government had done the best thing possible under the circumstances. Robert Anstruther followed, setting forth the opinion that the best solution of the difficulty would have been

for England to have acted in concert with Russia—a course not too late to take even now. Elcho, who apparently has quite recovered from the illness which recently kept him from the House, discursively and at great length ranged through modern history as bearing on the Eastern Question, showing generally how good the Turks had been, and how bad the Russians. Some slight signs of impatience being shown when the noble lord prepared to read an extract to the former effect, he, facing members opposite, sharply rated them for the interruption, observing that they had denounced the Turks, knowing nothing about them except what they had read in the *Daily News*, and insisting that, if he pleased, he should draw the opposite side of the picture.

Anderson, amid cheers from below the gangway, declared himself an uncompromising supporter of Gladstone's resolutions in their integrity. Newdegate said he should vote for the resolutions in order to show his conviction that if England guaranteed the integrity of a foreign country she had a right to require the fulfilment of that country's pledges. Shaw-Lefevre, Yorke, Lubbock, and Grantham continued the debate in a thin House, of the members present fully one-half rising to their feet as each speaker sat down, and endeavouring to catch the Speaker's eye. At a quarter to eleven the number of intending speakers (a peculiarity about whom was that they appeared in no measure reduced as successive speeches were made) passed the round score.

Among them were Walter and A. M. Sullivan, the House, being divided by sections, calling for one or other of these gentlemen. The Speaker decided in favour of Walter, who, in supporting the resolutions, scrupulously followed the suggestion he had thrown out earlier in the evening, by making a short speech. He made a good point by likening the mission of Lord Salisbury and Sir H. Elliot to the embassy of Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh for the purpose of effecting the deliverance of the children of Israel; there being, as he showed, this difference between the two missions—that whilst Moses and Aaron were endowed with the coercive power of the plagues, Salisbury and Elliot were powerless to do more than advise.

Hermon having addressed the House, Goschen expressed the strong satisfaction with which the debate was viewed from that side of the House. There had been a marked change in its tone since it opened. What a wide space intervened between the

bellicose utterances of the Secretary of State for War and the Secretary of State for the Home Department! The only quarter of the world where the debate would not be satisfactory was, Goschen thought, Constantinople. After some words from Kenealy, the debate was further adjourned.

May 14. — The division. The resumption this afternoon of the debate on Gladstone's resolutions did not find the House of Commons very full. Ministers were in their places, but the front Opposition bench would have been tenantless save for the presence of Childers. The back benches on each side were barely half full. But this appearance of lack of interest was delusive, the fact being that members had taken especial care to be in their places at prayer time, and so secured seats, whilst the earlier proceedings of the evening were not of sufficient interest to induce them to remain in their places. Before the questions were put the front Opposition bench began to fill, amongst the arrivals being Hartington, Forster, and Harcourt. Gladstone did not come in for more than two hours later, taking his seat towards the conclusion of Harcourt's speech. The attendance of strangers was equal to the accommodation of the galleries; but by reason of the absence of the Peers that portion of the House failed to present the crowded appearance marked on the opening night of the debate.

Whalley varied the flow of notices and questions by rising to give notice of a question to Kenealy. He proposes to ask the member for Stoke to repeat the statements uttered by him in the House on Friday morning, that this country had deliberately sacrificed two millions of lives during the famine in Ireland, and that the conduct of British soldiers in India after the Mutiny was worse than the atrocities of the Turks in Bulgaria. Whalley, it appeared, had given private notice to Kenealy of his intention to put this question, and Kenealy had abstained from putting in an appearance. Whalley, amid much laughter, gave notice that he would put the question on a future day, with the object of having Kenealy's words "taken down."

The House had filled up during question time, but it thinned again upon Waddy's rising to resume the debate. Waddy declared in the course of his speech that he was one of those who

would have voted for the five resolutions, supposing Gladstone had maintained them in their integrity. At the same time he recognised the propriety of dropping the last three, a conviction in which he was confirmed by the indignation excited on the other side by the announcement that they were not to be pressed to a division. After some words from Bruce, Harcourt, referring to the declaration from the Ministerial bench that the policy of England should be, and was, one of strict neutrality, observed, that Derby's answer to the Gortschakoff Circular was an offensive piece of neutrality. Amid cheers from the Opposition he declared that he was happy to have lived to see the day when it had become certain that British interests might not be defended through the odious instrumentality of Turks. That was a worn-out policy, which, after the recent manifestations of public opinion, it would be impossible to revive. He agreed with Gladstone that the knell of the Turkish Empire had sounded, and confessed that he had long wished to hear that passing bell.

When Harcourt resumed his seat, it was noticeable that no Conservative rose, and it soon became clear that a policy of silence had been imposed (or accepted) on the Ministerial benches. Tollemache Sinclair having addressed the House from behind the front Opposition bench, George Bowyer ingeniously attempted to give a semblance of evenness to the debate by crossing over to the Conservative side, addressing the Speaker from the seat usually occupied by Beresford-Hope. He had an audience of seventeen persons, Winn representing her Majesty's Government; Stafford Northcote being at the moment seated on the front Opposition bench engaged in amicable conversation with Bright, its only other occupant. O'Clery next caught the Speaker's eye, when the audience was further reduced, there being now only eleven persons in the House. Only three Irish members rallied round the Chevalier, and of these one-third (M'Kenna) was waiting in the hope of next finding an opportunity to deliver a speech, the notes of which he held in his hand. Fawcett, rising just before ten o'clock, had a fuller audience, a circumstance he found not altogether to his advantage. As compared, for example, with the reception accorded by the Ministerialists to Kenealy when, rising at the close of Friday night's debate, he proceeded to attack Gladstone, Fawcett's reception from the opposite benches was most embarrassing.

Loud cries of "'Vide, 'vide, 'vide," accompanied the statement of his argument.

Once, when these cries had risen to a height that almost drowned his voice, Fawcett, turning towards the source of the interruption, said, "Yes, I know you don't like what I am about to say," an impeachment which the Ministerialists accepted with hilarious cheering. "And that," he continued, when the storm had spent itself—"and that is why I am particularly desirous, and quite determined, to say it."

It was half-past ten when Hartington rose, Havelock, M'Kenna, P. O'Brien, and two or three other members, rising from the Opposition benches. These gentlemen at once gave way to the leader of the Opposition, and loud cheers from both sides of the now crowded House welcomed what was taken as a signal that the prolonged debate had reached its penultimate and most interesting stage. Hartington commenced with some smart hitting out at Ministers and their followers, raising a storm of cheering and counter-cheering by the declaration, quietly led up to, that among the few and scanty rights of the Opposition was that of managing their own affairs in their own way. As to the resolutions before the House, he argued at some length to show that they comprehended the true policy, or what ought to be the true policy, of the Government.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who spoke amid much enthusiasm on the Ministerial benches, said he did not deny to the Opposition that local liberty and self-government which they claimed for provinces in the East. Only if they were to take as a practical illustration of the effects of such self-government, what had happened during the past fortnight within the ranks of the Liberal party, he could not say that the example was encouraging. As to the general issue of the policy of the Government, he declined to have it judged by the standard of success. It had failed, but that failure was due not more to the deplorable folly of Turkey than to the deplorable impatience of Russia. What the Government now desired was to maintain a strict neutrality, and they desired to watch over the interests of England, being vigilant, but not over-hasty.

It was twenty minutes after midnight when Gladstone rose, amid prolonged cheering from the Opposition. At this time the House had assumed an aspect marvellously different from that

indicated above. Since ten o'clock it had been slowly filling, and now it was crowded in every part—floor, bar, and galleries; prominent among the members in the gallery facing the Opposition benches being Biggar and Parnell. The seats in the gallery over the clock appropriated to the Peers were not less crowded, and for the first time since Monday week, when the debate opened, the House presented the thronged, eager, excited appearance peculiar to it at great crises. Gladstone spoke much more quietly than a week ago, a circumstance possibly in some measure due to the marked difference in the bearing towards him of the Ministerialists. A week ago he spoke amid frequent interruptions from gentlemen opposite. To-night he held the attention of the House throughout his speech, the outburst of impatience when he roundly declared that throughout the policy they have attempted, from the first to the last, the Ministry have failed in everything, being speedily repressed.

He concluded amid enthusiastic cheering. His speech occupied a little over an hour and a quarter in its delivery.

After a vain attempt from Major O'Gorman to elicit from the House an expression of opinion as to the nationality of the Bashi-Bazouks, the House divided. The numbers were:—

For Gladstone's Resolutions	...	...	...	...	...	223
Against	...	...	...	...	...	354
						<hr/>
Majority	...	...	...	...	...	131

May 15.—3 a.m. It was an odd thing to see Gladstone just
 The pomatum- now taking advantage of the pause occasioned
 pot. by the ringing cheers his eloquence drew forth
 to seize a short, thick-set pomatum-pot, remove the cork, and
 proceed to refresh himself. Doubtless, in years to come, when
 a future Froude, a successor to Kinglake, or a heritor of
 Hallam, shall sit down to write the history of the debate
 just closed, we shall hear something of the cabals that pre-
 ceded it. We shall have set forth in rounded periods the
 enormous interests at stake. We may have sketched in bold
 figures in the background the armies of Russia and Turkey
 clutching each other by the throat on the banks of the Danube
 or in the mountainous passes of Asia Minor. We shall hear of

the outburst of popular sympathy which made it possible for an Opposition feeble in numbers to make a gallant and not unsuccessful stand against a Ministry powerful beyond precedent. We shall hear of the speeches that were made and of the excitement that prevailed; of the disdainful silence of the Opposition when the figures were announced, and of the ringing cheers of the Conservatives.

But history will scorn to mention that modest pomatum-pot, oval in shape, four inches in height, and supplied with an ill-fitting cork that baffled the frenzied efforts of the orator to replace it. And yet peradventure without the assistance of this glass bottle, with its mysterious contents that looked like melted pomatum and might have been egg and sherry, we should never have had this great speech, with its broadly based arguments, its towering eloquence, and its subdued tone of triumph proclaiming the accustomed scorn which minorities have for the brute force of numbers.

The pomatum-pot, with its contumacious cork and its mysterious contents, played a prominent part in the delivery of the speech; but it is probable that whilst its assistance was desirable, it was by no means indispensable. It must be admitted that for a statesman retired from business Gladstone was in wonderful force to-night, as indeed he has been throughout the week. Few feats in Parliamentary history will equal that he accomplished a week ago, when, bantered on all sides, bullied by some, silently deserted by others, openly reproached by a few, he stood at bay in an assembly where, within recent memory, a nod from him was almost sufficient to pass an Act of Parliament.

He had then come down prepared to make a speech on a subject he had thoroughly studied, and of the details of which he was perfectly master. On the threshold of the forum he was met by a wrangling crowd, who hurried and harried him, attacking him in flank and rear, and inflicting upon him a hustling such as would have shaken a carefully prepared oration out of the most experienced Parliamentary speaker. But at the end of two hours, when the House was wearied and worn out with the excitement of the preliminary squabble, Gladstone rose and delivered a speech which even his enemies (and in the House of Commons they are infinitely more in number than his friends) admit was one of his grandest efforts.

Since then a week has gone by, and speeches have been strewn like salt on the verdurous highway, blighting everything they fell upon and turning living green into dull and lifeless brown. It has been such a time as that bemoaned in the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" after the albatross had been shot—

"There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye."

Men had come and gone, but Gladstone, who has a conscientious belief that when he has to reply to a debate he must hear what has been said in it, has, for the most part, sat it out. He is the only living man who heard Childers all through his monologue. This was early in the debate, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with commendable anxiety to do his duty, showed a disposition to imitate Gladstone's patience. But after the first hour Northcote was led out into the fresh air, and will not, I fancy, make a similar attempt.

Gladstone sat it all out, and lived to hear Elcho, in his forcible-feeble style, settle the whole business. He watched Robert Anstruther gambolling among the thickets of foreign politics. He listened throughout to Bourke's speech, and the only relaxation he has permitted himself was marked to-night, when he abstained from taking his seat till seven o'clock. Thus he missed Waddy, and lost the opportunity of observing how, in competent hands, a question of foreign politics may be treated precisely as if it were a case of common assault; how the House of Commons may have the forensic forefinger shaken at it as if it were a special jury; and how the Speaker may be addressed with that mingled air of familiarity and deference to which judges who go circuit gradually grow accustomed.

He came in in time to hear some of the witticisms of Harcourt, and very good they were, though more than ever reminiscent of surprise bon-bons deliberately manufactured at home, carefully wrapped up in small parcels, and brought down to the House with the moment of their delivery marked on each. But when—after Tollemache Sinclair had, with admirable effect, recited a prize essay (with appendices) on the relations between Russia and Turkey extending over a period of two hundred years—Bowyer rose from the opposite side, and showed a disposi-

tion to add a treatise on the constitutional history of the world, Gladstone, seizing his hat, and clapping his hands to his coat-tail pockets, to make sure that he had not forgotten the treasured pomatum-pot, hastily fled from the House, and remained absent for nearly two hours.

But it is all over at last. Some speeches are made, and some are yet carried about in the breast coat-pockets of members, and may, as Richard Power humorously suggested, be either delivered to suffering constituents during the recess, or published in the form of shilling pamphlets. Winn's long sentry-duty at the lobby-door, with his gently spoken but irresistible "You will be back after dinner?" is finished. The victors are crowned; the vanquished are wisely making the best of their defeat; Gladstone has finally got the cork into the now empty pomatum-pot; the ringing cheers of the majority have died away, and the prevailing anxiety on the part of two-thirds of the British House of Commons is whether, at this hour of the morning, there will be a hansom cab left in Palace Yard.

May 18.—Another The happiest thing said during the long debate of
not by Mr. last week was uttered *sotto voce* by Lowe. When
 Lowe. Wolff, accepting the suggestion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, substituted for "the previous question" an amendment deprecating censure of the Government unless an alternative policy were set forth, Lowe, turning to Gladstone, quoted the well-known proverb—

"Lupus pilum mutat, non mentem."

CHAPTER XIX.

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE AS LEADER.

A Vocation missed—"Times of Refreshing in Spain"—The new Black Rod—Sir Stafford Northcote as Leader—Dull Times—What's to be done with Parnell and Biggar?—Mr. Beresford-Hope's Joke—Mr. Courtney talks himself out—"The Admiral"—Debate on the Gallows—Sir John Holker—Sir Eardley Wilmot—Mr. Pease—Sir Henry Jackson—Mr. Bright.

May 17.—A vocation missed. Ward Hunt has really been suffering from the gout, and has been more concerned about getting his leg in a comfortable position, than about manœuvring the British fleet. He came down to-day full of resentment at being brought out to answer two questions from private members, and straightway fell foul of Mitchell Henry, who had ventured to ask a question about the report of the Arctic Committee of Inquiry. Ill-tempered under all circumstances, the gout had made him furious, and he lectured Mitchell Henry as if that inoffensive gentleman had, in a moment of playfulness, run away with his stick.

I was much struck with the procedure of Biggar whilst the little scene was in progress. Whilst Ward Hunt stood at the table, and, with an angry flush on his face, declined to answer his querist, Biggar walked down the gangway to leave the House. As he walked, he turned and looked over his shoulder at the gigantic First Lord with a curious expression on his face, in which was easy to read the half-sad, half-admiring thought, that in Ward Hunt some Irish constituency has lost a worthy member.

"If he were only one of us," Biggar said, with a sigh, to Parnell, as, a little later, they talked the incident over, "and if we could only keep him awake through a long sitting, what a treasure he would be!"

May 18.—"Times of Refreshing in Spain." It is said that on commencing work, the Select Committee on Sunday Closing in Ireland, anxious to obtain the widest information on the subject, ordered five copies of a work they saw advertised under the title of "Times of Refreshing in Spain." On the parcel being

delivered, it was found that the book was a quarterly periodical, published under the auspices of the Edinburgh Spanish Evangelisation Society.

May 21. — The new Black Rod. Sir William Knollys, the newly appointed Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, has been duly introduced in the House of Lords, and read a first time. To-night he made his first official appearance in the House of Commons, and very creditably went through the ordeal of summoning the Commons to hear the Royal Assent given by commission in the other House. Sir William was not quite sure about the formula, and has not yet hit off the precise locality of the bar; but he is young yet, and these things will come to him by-and-by. Sir Augustus Clifford, the late holder of this venerable and useful office, knew to half an inch the exact spot where he was when he had walked backwards a certain number of steps, and never turned round till he was well clear of the bar.

May 23.—Sir Stafford Northcote as leader. Stafford Northcote is in his place, with his hands folded before him, his hair tumbling about his forehead, and his faithful glasses doing all they can to hide the fact that his eyes are closed in slumber. He has filled Disraeli's place for three months now, and the House has had adequate opportunity of forming an opinion of his capacity as leader. I like Sir Stafford, and am sorry to have to record the fact that, on the whole, he has not come up even to the modest expectation formed in advance. No one hoped that he would make a brilliant leader; but it was thought that at least he would be a competent one. It seems a hard thing to say of a man who does not by presumptuous manner court harsh criticism, but it is nevertheless true, that even his most friendly critic could not, after three months' experience, affirm that Stafford Northcote is a competent leader.

The standard of excellence in this matter is pitched very high, as may be tested by a single fact. Practically Northcote led the House of Commons last session, Disraeli studiously withdrawing himself and, with great adroitness and a skilful kindness that may only be appreciated in retrospect, pushed his intended successor to the front. At that time Sir Stafford's frequent interposition appearing to be accidental, and his function not being

officially recognised, he received great *kudos* for the successful manner in which he extricated the Government from frequent dilemmas. It was the season when the Merchant Shipping Bill was in full course, and the tact, temper, and presence of mind with which he frequently stepped in to guide the House out of the blind alleys into which Adderley had led it became matter of daily comment.

But at that time Northcote was only Chancellor of the Exchequer, and as nothing was expected from him in the way of leadership, indications of ability in that direction were received with tokens of grateful surprise. Now that he actually fills the position which last session he occasionally dropped into, the standard of criticism is altogether changed. Between this year and last there is, as far as points of criticism go, just that difference between the Leader of the House and the Chancellor of the Exchequer that exists between the reception of a gentleman who earns the enthusiastic plaudits of an audience before whom he presents himself as an amateur, and the cool critical stare of the same people when he comes before them as a professional actor. It would seem that Northcote was a much better leader of the House of Commons last session than this. For the reasons indicated, I believe that conclusion to be fallacious.

But the fact remains that Northcote, being tried, has been found wanting. He is void of the principal qualities which go to make a successful leader of this sensitive and critical assembly. He has not eloquence; he lacks lightness of touch; heaven has denied him wit or humour; and there is missed in him that lightning-like perception of the right thing to say in a difficult moment that distinguished his predecessor. These are dangerously definite statements, that may be cavilled at, and possibly confuted. But there is one fact, which no member of the House of Commons accustomed closely to attend its business will deny. However it be, from whatever lack, or from whatever superabundance, Northcote has not that weight of personal authority in the House essential to a successful leader. When he speaks, his dictum carries precisely that authority which pertained to the centurion; but there is nothing more. No man ever indulges in curiosity as to what he will say on a given subject, beyond the measure of interest excited by a formal announcement of a Ministerial decision, which might as well be made by

Cavendish Bentinck. In fact, Cavendish Bentinck is of himself a much more interesting personage than is the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Northcote is the only Chancellor of the Exchequer of modern times who might have been expected to produce a Budget which left taxation precisely as he found it. Nobody questions that he did the right thing. There was no actual necessity for increasing taxation, and there was no particular opportunity for reducing it. Accordingly he did the most natural thing in the world—he let the machinery of taxation alone. But what other man amongst contemporaries who have held similar office would have done the same? Would Disraeli? Would Gladstone? Would Lowe? Not one of these great spirits could have existed after such an ignoble feat. Disraeli would have performed some financial legerdemain. Taking sixpence out of the right-hand pocket he would have conveyed it to the left, and while thus leaving the actual state of the finances as he found it, he would have interested the nation, and possibly have made it believe that he had reduced its taxation. Gladstone would not have slept in his bed till he had discovered some means of taking off something somewhere; whilst Lowe would probably have introduced the income-tax into the newly acquired territory of Fiji, and so obtained the double gratification of disturbing a hornet's nest and of carrying forward a considerable surplus, without tempering the full enjoyment of the moment by making some people comfortable by reduced taxation.

To the mind of Stafford Northcote it appeared the simplest thing in the world to produce the unambitious Budget which has already become part of history. It is in the same matter-of-fact manner that he leads, or attempts to lead, the House of Commons. The pity of it is that the House does not like matter-of-fact management, and, on the whole, prefers the little excitement consequent on being driven unpleasantly near to a ditch, to the calm and equable enjoyment of life under a man of whom it may be safely predicted what he will do next.

May 29. — Dull times. I do not know when I was so much struck with the hopelessly depressed aspect of the House of Commons as to-night. It was bad enough last night; but there was then an adventitious hilarity connected with meeting after a brief

recess. Members had at least the opportunity of opening conversation by asking each other how they were, and where they had been during the recess. To-night this privilege was denied them, and a deep melancholy settled over the assembly from the moment the Speaker took the chair. The only really cheerful man on the premises is Knatchbull-Hugessen, who, in the absence of everybody else, found an opportunity of presenting himself as Leader of the Opposition, and in that capacity questioning the Leader of the House on the probable course of public business. There was not, throughout the night, an average of fifty members present, and the general aspect suggested that the remaining six hundred and ten had been swallowed up by an earthquake, and that this half-hundred had met to mourn their untimely decease.

Claud Hamilton, who had on the paper a motion relating to harbours on the north-east coast, was quite subdued in his manner, and as for Pease, his tone could not have been more melancholy had he just received information that the whole of his mines were flooded. Brassey, whom we expected to see return with a jovial sea-air about him, was not able to resist the prevailing atmosphere. Even Big Ben, who, as usual, took advantage of the empty condition of the House to inflict upon those present a repetition of his familiar speech, roared you as gently as a sucking dove. In brief, the House is not a lively place, and even the harsh metallic voice of Biggar, with his "Mr. Speaker, sir," would cause a welcome ripple on the dense and stagnant atmosphere.

May 30.—What's
to be done with
Parnell and
Biggar?

Twenty-three Irish members met to-day to consider what is to be done about Biggar and Parnell. Both these gentlemen were expected to be present, but they failed to put in an appearance at the meeting. After a brief delay, Parnell arrived, the bearer of a message from Biggar to the effect that he would be "down direckly." After a brief deliberation, the members arrived at the conclusion that perhaps they had better not wait; so they adjourned till next Saturday.

I am told it was quite delightful to hear the sigh of relief with which the members present arrived at this conclusion, and found themselves getting safely out of the room without having had to face the difficulty they had not ventured to settle. I

believe that if the meeting does not come off on Saturday, Biggar and Parnell will hold a meeting to consider what is to be done with the Home Rule Party.

Apropos, there is a conundrum with an obvious answer current just now.

Q.—“Why isn’t Parnell the biggest bore in the House?”

A.—“Because there’s a Biggar.”

June 6.—Mr. Beresford-Hope’s joke.

Midhat Pacha is improving the shining hours of his enforced retirement by studying other British institutions than the hoarding which stands before his hotel windows, and obscures the view of the river Thames. He was in the House of Commons this afternoon, sitting throughout the prolonged, and not always lively, debate on the Women’s Suffrage Bill. To a gentlemanly Turk, it must have been an occasion of especial interest to hear the first legislative assembly in the world debate whether she, whom Beresford-Hope more than once referred to as “lovely woman,” should have a vote. He arrived too late to hear Harcourt’s somewhat unnecessary inquiry as to whether the Government were dealing out to Turkey the same measure in respect to the Suez Canal as they meted to Russia. He also missed the public apology and penance of that amiable and ingenuous young man, Hanbury. But he heard Forsyth, who has got over the curious emotion that possessed him when he addressed the House on Monday night, and when his white neckcloth seemed so tightly tied as to throw an unaccustomed guttural tone into his speech. He heard the mellifluous eloquence of the O’Donoghue; the forensic funniness of Hopwood; the more and more impressive speech of Barttelot; the funereal observations of Duncan McLaren, who always succeeds in throwing an air of domestic affliction over any subject he touches; the Union-Club argumentativeness of Balfour; the slow utterance of the venerable member for Oxfordshire; and the chuckles of the member for Cambridge University at the jokes of Beresford-Hope.

I hear that Midhat was immensely delighted with Beresford-Hope, who, indeed, being on a subject which specially pleased him, surpassed himself. The funniest thing I have heard in the House for a long time was the chuckle with which he followed one of his own witticisms. He had made a joke, the House had

smiled, and was waiting for him to proceed. But Beresford-Hope stood silent, holding himself tightly with both hands by the collar of his coat, and with his head gently reposing on his right shoulder. Was he finished and about to sit down? Jacob Bright thought he was, and prepared to rise. But still Beresford-Hope stood in the same attitude, his face convulsively moving, and, as those who sat near him testify, volcanic agencies evidently at work within his body. Was he ill? Would apoplexy supervene, and would he, like an almost greater statesman, die on the floor of the House?

Matters were growing alarming, and the pause awful, when suddenly there sounded throughout the silent chamber a single, short, sharp chuckle. The convulsive movement had ceased, the working of the face had resolved itself into a broad grin, and the House, relieved of anxiety and immensely tickled at the comicality of the situation, burst into a roar of laughter, in which the grave Turk heartily joined.

Beresford-Hope, thinking that his audience had seen the joke at last, devoted himself to a succession of discharges of profound chuckles, which set the House off again, and for fully two or three minutes the remarkable scene was prolonged, Beresford-Hope feeling convinced that he had never made such a good joke as this in all his life.

Mr. Courtney
talks himself
out.

The House was evidently in for fun, and later in the evening it found its opportunity, and enjoyed itself to the full. At a quarter-past five, when there had been quite enough of set speeches on a subject with respect to which every one was agreed, Courtney rose, with portentous notes in his hand. Courtney is a gentleman who has illustrated, in a marked degree, the danger which assails the wisest men when they enter Parliament. If any man might be expected to understand the House of Commons, and to know wherein lay the possibility of success and wherein the certainty of failure, it is Leonard Courtney. Long before he was elected he was an *habitué* of the place, his face and figure being as familiar in the lobbies and under the gallery as those of the Serjeant-at-Arms. It was his business to write about proceedings in Parliament, and in the performance of his work he displayed conspicuous ability and supremely sound

judgment. When he took his seat, considerable curiosity was felt as to whether he would be a success or a failure. The odds seemed vastly in favour of the former result, and it was confidently anticipated that the Radical section of the Opposition had gained in the new member an important ally.

Courtney did not long leave the House without an opportunity of judging of his capacity and style as a Parliamentary speaker. The readiness to thrust himself into debate was, indeed, ominous. But he met with a favourable reception, though the impression left on the mind of impartial judges was not such as to maintain enthusiasm among his friends. A somewhat heavy, solemn manner, a voice which may not be said to be bell-like in the clearness of its intonation, and a general disposition rather to dogmatise than to argue, were the characteristics at once noted in the new-comer.

The difference in point of view when a man is writing a leading article and when he is addressing an assembly is enormous. But it was bridged by Courtney's self-confidence, and the House, from the beginning, has resented the unflattering mistake. It cannot be said of Courtney that he is self-conceited or presumptuous, as self-conceit and presumption are exemplified in the person of Edward Jenkins. He knows too much, and has seen too much, to make mistakes that are natural enough in an inflated bladder which for thoughts has dry peas, the rattle whereof stands it in place of argument. Courtney has even a modest, quiet manner. But he is also an obstinate man; and the more the House declines to hear him, the more he insists that it shall.

This disposition was prominently shown on the occasion when, in spite of opposition coming from all sides—not least from his own friends—he persisted in pressing forward his motion on the Eastern Question. It was exemplified to-day in another and more direct shape, when he wanted to make a speech and the House would not listen to him, and when, angrily persisting, he literally talked out the Bill on which he and his friends earnestly desired to divide. I have seen a man in a similar position come off victorious; but Courtney, after a long and obstinate struggle, was hopelessly beaten. There are several ways of getting to the other side of a stone wall which bars one's progress. Evidently the least effective way is

to beat one's head against it. Courtney, at the outset, lost his temper, and for fully thirty minutes battled against the determination of the House not to hear him. Had he been endowed with a spark of humour, he would have made an opening in the wall through which he might have crept, and thenceforward might have proceeded on his way with flying colours.

But when members see before them a gentleman who, some of them feel, may at one time or other have castigated them or their party in the leading columns of the *Times*, and who to this speciality adds the reputation of thinking a good deal of himself and of his opinions—when they have at their mercy such an one, and behold him, pale with passion, hurriedly mopping his face with a pocket-handkerchief which he has violently rolled into a ball; when they see him gulping down glasses of water; and, above all, when they behold him raise his clenched fist to high heaven, and shake it, the while his lips move in what amid the roar is dumb show—on such occasion the temptation is too much for them, and they give themselves up to the cruel enjoyment of the scene with the same *abandon* as their forefathers devoted themselves to the charms of cock-fighting, or the delight of badgering the beaver.

"*Mon Dieu!*" said Midhat Pacha, as his bright face and thickset but active figure disappeared down the steps of the gallery, "and this is the Parliament of the English people—the nation and the assembly which have been shocked by the little *divertissement* of our people in Bulgaria! Talk about shooting, ear-slitting, or even impalement! I would rather suffer any one of these inconveniences than have such a bad half-hour as *ce pauvre Courtney*. For persistent, relentless, merciless baiting of a human being I shall, if you please, take your House of Commons!"

June 7. — "The Sir W. Edmonstone, better known as "The Admiral," is improving every day, and is rapidly becoming as indispensable a part of the machinery of Parliamentary procedure as the Secretary to the Treasury, or the Speaker himself. It must be admitted that his "Hear! hear's!" are monotonous. It is enough for him that a Minister is speaking, or that a faithful supporter of the Government is addressing the chair. In such case the emphatic "Hear! hear!" is as much a matter of course with the Admiral

as the indrawing of his breath. It is in other directions that his genius manifests itself, and he demonstrates the fact that a man may be surpassingly eloquent without uttering an articulate word. For Parnell, Biggar, or Edward Jenkins there is no member of her Majesty's Government who is so effective in reply as the Admiral unattached. A turn of his body, a particular wave of his fan, are more expressive than a full-fledged speech.

Parnell has come to watch the Admiral with the care with which a mariner keeps his eye on the weather-glass. When he sees the gallant old gentleman thrust both his hands into his pockets and sit low down on the bench, with his knees on the Treasury bench, he knows he is treading on dangerous ground. When the Admiral glances at him with angry surprise and straightway turns away his head, Parnell understands that a crisis is approaching. When the Admiral turns his body half round, and begins fanning himself, Parnell can, using the word in a Parliamentary sense, see the white breakers immediately under his bow. When the Admiral coughs—and what a volume of surprise, disgust, indignation, doubt, scorn, reproof, or warning he can comprise in a cough!—Parnell furls his sails and makes all taut. When the Admiral stops his fanning, and, turning round, looks full across the House and cries “Oh!” Parnell takes an early opportunity of observing that he “will now conclude.”

To-night the Admiral was in fine trim, full of infinite resources. He terrified Whalley to a degree pitiable to behold, and so obfuscated that gentleman's usually clear intellect that he really did not know what he was saying, and so grievously offended the Speaker that he came very near to being “named.”

June 12.—Debate
on the gallows.

After spending five hours in a morning sitting at which nothing was done, the House met at nine o'clock this evening to discuss the question of the Abolition of Capital Punishment. There were not many members present, and the atmosphere of the place seemed impregnated with the associations connected with the subject-matter of Eardley Wilmot's resolution. At any time between nine and half-past eleven no one would have been absolutely surprised to see the chaplain walk across the floor of the House reading the Burial

Service, the while the clock in the Tower tolled dolefully. Even the Admiral coughed in a muffled tone, and his volleys of "hear, hear!" were attuned to the sound of musketry that rolls across the mound where some hero has been buried. As for the speaking, it was infinitely more mournfully impressive than one imagines would be the sensation of being hung. If a culprit, who had a full knowledge of the alternative implied, were allowed to make a choice between being hung straight off or hearing four long speeches in succession, the speakers being Eardley Wilmot, Pease, Henry Jackson, and the Attorney-General, I firmly believe he would stretch out his arms towards the gallows, and ask to be taken quickly away.

sir John Holker. All four members were surpassingly dull, and supremely prosy, so much so that it is difficult to establish any distinction. Nature has gifted the Attorney-General with a voice the tone of which would, of itself, raise him above mediocrity. I think the most exact similitude might be conveyed to those who are familiar with the creaking of the cordage in a ship's rigging the while the vessel lies at anchor in a pitchy sea. Over and above the possession of this unique voice, Holker has a deliberate way of saying nothing which is exceedingly irritating on a sultry summer night when the nerves are unstrung.

Sir Eardley Wilmot. Eardley Wilmot, who always speaks with tears in his voice, and has a rapid, glib intonation, for which there is, apparently, an inexhaustible supply of words, is an amiable man, full of good intentions and generous sympathies; but not invigorating as a public speaker. A slight *nuance* of difference in the heaviness of Pease, as compared with Eardley Wilmot, is found in the superior aggressiveness of the latter. Eardley Wilmot throws into his speech a certain deprecatory tone, which says pretty plainly—

"I know I am not a favourite speaker, and that you think I am prosy. I do not think so myself. I know that in Warwick, where I presided for twenty-two years at the Quarter Sessions, my observations were listened to with the profoundest deference by the ushers and other officials, and that sometimes when I have made a joke (for I can joke if you only let me), the court has

been convulsed with laughter. The remark applies to Bristol, where I was County Court Judge; and at Marylebone, where I held the same important office, a similar state of things was established. Still you have a right to your own opinion, and I can only say that I shall be very much obliged to you if you will let me finish my speech."

Mr. Pease. Pease shares Eardley Wilmot's self-conviction that what he has to say is very well worth the while of the House to hear. But he carries this conviction to a point which precludes admission of the possibility that the House may be right in taking a contrary view. Pease also is a good man, and comes of a family which is a glory to Durham and an honour to England. He knows this as well as I or any one else, and upon it he grounds the assumption that the House of Commons must hear him, willy nilly. For one who, as Forster would say, is of Quaker parentage, Pease even assumes a bellicose air, when the House shows impatience under his dreary harangues—a frame of mind in which he is strengthened and comforted by George Balfour and Alderman McArthur, who always make a point of rallying round Pease when he turns upon the finally rebellious House and insist that he has a right to read the concluding fifty pages of notes of his speech.

Sir Henry Jackson. Henry Jackson, when he happens to speak on subjects to which he has devoted special attention, carries more weight than either of his coadjutors in the task of burying the hapless House of Commons under heaps of sand-dried words. He is a man who stands high in his profession, and does not too often trouble the House; but when he does he brings to the task a voice which possesses a singular quality of somnolence, and a manner tinged with a shade of subdued, yet irresistible grief.

On the whole, it will be gathered that the House of Commons was not a cheerful place to-night, for, in addition to this accidental concurrence of dulness, each member found it necessary to take up a considerable portion of time in setting forth his arguments, using—if the appropriateness of the simile may excuse its unpleasantness—the short drop in the process of concluding the lives of members.

Mr. Bright. Bright, who had been sitting patiently waiting for an opening, did not find it till after midnight, by which time it was generally thought he had abandoned his well-known intention to speak. For some sessions past he has avoided speaking at a late hour of the night, and has, indeed, found it very difficult to speak at all. Often he has come down with the intention of taking part in a debate, and when a favourable moment arrived has, whilst he hesitated, allowed it to pass away. You have seen boys standing on the brink of the water, with the palms of their hands joined, and head bent ready to plunge in—ready in everything save the power of determination. Thus it is with Bright in these later days. The great orator, the indomitable debater, who in former times plunged into a debate as a duck takes to the water, now stands shivering on the brink, mortally afraid lest when he looks towards the chair he should catch the Speaker's eye. When he is once on his feet this curious trepidation vanishes, or is at least sternly subdued. He is then as calm, self-possessed, and apparently as strong as of yore. His voice has lost its finer tone, but is still superb. His pathos is as moving, his argument as convincing, as of old, and if his denunciation and his personal references seem occasionally unduly peevish, it is because he has lived his life in times when denunciation had a daily new birth in continued wrong, and, the habit remaining, it is fain to be applied to petty things.

For example, his lofty scorn and almost unutterable contempt for Holker in his capacity as Attorney-General, is one of the smaller passions of his Parliamentary life. But there is something that grates on the senses in the spectacle of a man who has been a foremost figure through a quarter of a century of English political life occupying his time in the hopeless endeavour to scorch an intellectual salamander such as the present Attorney-General.

CHAPTER XX.

THE COUNTY FRANCHISE.

Mr. Waddy on Home Affairs—Mr. Sharman Crawford's Oratory—The Indian Budget—Sir George Campbell—Sir George Balfour—Mr. David Davies—Mr. Whalley and the Unhappy Nobleman—Cabinet Pensions—"The Divine Williams"—Lord Hartington votes for the County Franchise Bill—The Straight Tip on the County Franchise "Selling Stakes"—Sir Charles Forster in Search of a Petition.

June 14. — Mr. Waddy on home affairs. How a man's career may be ruined, and his prospects in a certain direction blighted, by an accidental success is forcibly illustrated in the case of Waddy. Two or three sessions ago he happened to do something that very much wanted doing, and which nobody else had shown a disposition to accomplish. It was at a time when the Hon. Windbag who nominally represents Stoke was as yet unpricked. The House of Commons, in the aggregate scornful of the man and individually disinclined to touch him, had permitted the Windbag to swell and swell till it threatened to exceed in bulk the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. The humblest pin, the cheapest needle, would have sufficed to make the whole thing collapse. But there was wanting the hand that should give the necessary direction and propulsion. This hand Waddy supplied, and in a speech of native coarseness and physical vigour which would not have disgraced the Doctor himself in the palmiest days of the Tichborne trial, he not only pricked the Windbag, but kicked the empty and flaccid case up and down the floor of the House, to its great discomfiture and the supreme satisfaction of onlookers.

Waddy deserved and obtained great applause for this service, and was temporarily lifted up from the position of member from whose addresses, as savouring of an unwholesome mixture of the conventicle and the Old Bailey, the House had hitherto decidedly shrunk. The pity of it has ever since been that Waddy was not able to perceive that this was a *succès d'occasion*. At brief intervals since that period he has been setting himself deliber-

ately to prick bladders. Like Hudibras, whom in some other respects he resembles, he is at all times prepared to

“abandon dwelling,
And out to ride a-colonelling.”

His special pride is that he is “a plain common-sense man.” No sentiment for him, if you please; not that he does not understand sentiment and poetry, and all that sort of thing, for he understands everything. But he has acquired his knowledge, as chemists ascertain the qualities of noxious and poisonous drugs, with the intent that he might the better purvey antidotes.

He brings into the House of Commons a manner of address which may be successful with a common jury, but which grates upon the feelings and taste of the House, and irritates it beyond expression. It is his special vocation, when a debate on a given subject is in progress, to present himself and give “a common-sense view” of the case under discussion. As he has a loud voice, an emphatic manner, and a professional art (much cultivated in cases of breach of promise or of assault and battery) of accentuating facts until they are barely recognised by the bewildered person chiefly concerned, Waddy has no difficulty in getting up a storm. When, as happened some nights ago, he tries to swim in the troubled waters of foreign policy, and brings common-jury oratory to bear upon the Eastern Question, the effect is simply ludicrous failure, unrelieved even by the pleasure of goading some one into angry reply.

To-night he took the “plain person” and “common-sense” view of the status of political prisoners, baring his small and fussy soul to the indignant gaze of men who are Christians rather than Methodists, and whose Liberalism is untrammelled by the daily habitude of subjecting their convictions to the yoke of a brief. The eloquent scorn poured out upon Waddy by Joseph Cowen—a man not easily moved to saying bitter things—and the more official disclaimer put forth from the front Opposition bench by Hibbert, will not have been lost, if they convince the member for Barnstaple that there are influences at work in political questions beyond the narrow prejudice which plumes itself with the title of “common-sense,” and the offensive egotism that would pass for “plain speaking.”

June 14. — Mr. Sharman Crawford's oratory. I wish it were convenient for Sharman Crawford to be with us a little more. He is not often here, and when he comes he generally refrains from obtruding himself upon notice. He has, however, his field-day once a year—if he can get it—when he brings forward a Bill, generally but vaguely understood to be an amendment on Gladstone's Irish Land Act. A pleasant, quiet-looking gentleman, on the shady side of sixty, Sharman Crawford endears himself to the student of Parliamentary manner by his interesting but hopelessly unavailing struggles to explain the details of his Bill. It would be unjust to say that he does not understand the Bill himself. His failure lies in his inability to make other people comprehend it.

He got the butt-end of this afternoon all to himself, and amid the breathless excitement of a very small House he struggled with his self-imposed task. A peculiarity about Crawford is, that the consciousness that certain words which may present themselves to him do not convey the desired expression is no obstacle to their use. He begins a sentence, the end and object of which are perfectly clear to him at the outset. But as he proceeds the difficulties thicken, his meaning becomes an *ignis fatuus*, and he stumbles along, gallantly persisting in keeping up a show of locomotion, although the fact that he is no nearer the desired end is painfully apparent, not less to him than to his audience.

I took down just now a *verbatim* note of one or two of Crawford's sentences, which, apart from the special interest of the case, have their value as indicating the kind of literature the official reporter might produce.

"It is so strong upon that in favour of the principle that I advocate," said Crawford, "that I could not help bringing it before the House, though on the other hand there is a hostility which may not be so."

This passage referred to a synopsis of the bearings of his Bill which had appeared in the *Standard*, which Sharman Crawford, hopelessly floundering in a sea of words, gratefully produced and read to the House, "because," as he said, "it is so plain."

"Sir," he continued, taking a fresh start, "this is a question, this is, perhaps, a question in reference to this Ulster custom, and those others which is more difficult, and not easy to be understood

by persons who do not understand what the custom means, or would have been in former ages."

"The difference between the English tenants and Irish tenants," he continued, coming to the point, "to a very great extent is this: that nearly all the improvements are made by the tenants in Ireland, the improvements which in Ireland by the landlord, consequently the tenants will and must expect they will have some security for the laying out of the capital, which is all they have to look to now or then. And so the landlord, as compared with the tenant as against the landlord, the tenant is not in the same position as the landlord with respect to improvements."

Nothing could be clearer than this, and Cavendish Bentinck, standing in his favourite attitude near the Speaker's chair, evidently was much moved by the argument. It only shows how deeply rooted is the prejudice of a Saxon Parliament against all that concerns Ireland, that three minutes being left for debate after Crawford had moved the second reading of the Bill, and Plunket had moved its rejection, the measure was talked out by the inoffensive-looking but really iniquitous Goldney.

It was refreshing to see how shocked O'Connor Power was at this, how pale Parnell grew with righteous wrath, and how obviously Biggar came to the conclusion that further dealings with an assembly like this was little short of criminal.

Nothing offends the sensibility of an Irish member so much as the cowardly act of declining to meet a question on a plain issue, and taking refuge in the dubious device of talking it out.

June 15. — The Indian Budget. Hearing that the Indian Budget was the chief business in the House of Commons to-night, knowing that India is regarded as the most precious jewel in the British crown, and having heard something of the outburst of indignation which followed upon a foolish expression, indicating mental equanimity in view of a contingent perishing of India, Synd Yakwob Khan Tora donned his pink silk bed-quilt this afternoon, and hastened down to the House of Commons. Having been some weeks in London, and having grown accustomed to the excitement which swells in the popular and official mind in view of any great event—such, for example, as that which took place

to-day, when the Prince of Wales visited a training ship on the Thames—the Ambassador of the great potentate of Kashgaria was uneasy at the dalliance of his guide.

“We shall be late,” he said, in the language of his country; “we shall never get in. There will be crowds round the House. Your policemen will be drawn up in line to secure an entrance for the Members of Parliament, as I have read was necessary when the great Kenealy made a speech on the question of Tichborne. Every seat in the House will be occupied, from floor to topmost seat in the gallery, and when my master, Yakoob Beg, asks me to tell him how the British House of Commons dealt with the affairs of India, I shall have to say that I could not get into the House, and that I know no more than what I shall read in the newspapers.”

And Synd Yakwob Khan Tora hitched his bedgown about his colossal person, and strode mightily up and down his apartment.

Sir George Campbell. When the Envoy entered the House George Campbell was on his feet, and had been in that position for three-quarters of an hour. He followed George Hamilton, who had gradually worn out his voice in the course of a speech of upwards of an hour's duration, and had scarcely breath left wherewith to fulminate his peroration. There were at the moment exactly seven members representing the numbers and the majesty of the House. George Hamilton, with his hat pushed back on his forehead, was pensively contemplating the white gaiters that cover his well-polished boots, and communing with himself as to whether he had better go to dinner whilst George Campbell was speaking or when Smollett rose. Just behind him sat the Admiral, with arms folded and head bent down, curiously quiet and subdued. He had started heartily enough with George Hamilton, cheering him from Calcutta to Bombay. But he had broken down when the noble lord went into the question of accounts, and having been fixed with a supercilious stare when he called “hear, hear!” in the wrong place, he had suddenly subsided, and sat silent and motionless, like a clock run down.

Above the gangway the Admiral represented the full tale of the rank and file of the Conservative Party. Below the gangway

on the same side the prospect was just twice as inspiring, there being two members present, Smollett and Arthur Balfour. Half an hour earlier, Smollett, noticing signs of huskiness in George Campbell's voice, had hastily gone out and fetched himself a glass of water, ready to refresh himself when his time came to speak. But George plodded gallantly along, and Smollett, nervously sipping at the water, had by this time left himself only about three spoonful, which he judiciously put beyond reach of his arm. The position was an awkward one, for he could not leave the House for a fresh supply without running the risk of losing his chance by George Campbell's suddenly subsiding, and, being the sole tenant of the upper range of benches, he could not impress into his service a friendly member.

Balfour sat on the lower bench, gracefully reclining upon the seat usually sanctified by the presence of his affectionate friend and gesticulatory mentor, Beresford Hope. On the other side of the House the front row of benches would have been empty but for the presence of Fawcett, who sat patiently in his familiar corner, with head resting on his hand. On the bench behind there was no one. But, following up the line above the gangway, the eye of the Envoy of Kashgar rested with a gleam of recognition upon the figure of George Balfour, who, with arms folded and knees uplifted, to the end that they might rest upon the back of the front Opposition bench, sat just below George Campbell, so that not a word of his concise speech, not a note of his melodious voice, should escape him.

Sir George Bal- George Campbell is to George Balfour what
four. Hector was to the Trojans, or Achilles to the
Greeks. The storm of Parliamentary contumely and scorn has passed over George Balfour, and, after a gallant resistance, has laid him low. Long he stood and braved the tempest, with growing furrows on his brow, fresh depths of pleading in his eyes, and new notes of plaintiveness in his voice. But in the end it was too much for him. It broke his spirit and soured his life, and though, even yet, he has not given up his passion for making speeches, he is content humbly to catch the Speaker's eye in mid-dinner hour, and is glad if he may rattle out a few thousand words, even though there be none to hear. George Campbell,

however, though temporarily flooded by the great storm that burst forth when he made his ill-judged reference to a fallen man, still stands erect and defies the tempest. George Balfour would if he could. But things being as they are, he is content to shelter himself under the spare figure of his harder brother in affliction, and to bleat commendatory "hear, hears!" when Sir George of Edenwood remorselessly talks for an hour at a time to an empty, or, if full, a restive House.

On the same bench as George Campbell is Laing, who, it is too evident, has also a speech ready. Behind these there is nothing but empty seats and the bare walls.

Mr. David Davies. Below the gangway, two seats behind Fawcett, sits in elegant attitude, and what Gladstone would call West-end attire, David Davies, the member for Cardigan. What attraction the debate has for him it would be hard to determine. India is not a place the chief speciality of which is its possession of working men, and it is working men that form the strong points in Davies' Parliamentary oratory.

"I have been a working man myself, Mr. Speaker," he has often told us, with his fine South Wales accent, "and now I employ a good many men, and pay more in wages in a week than some of you would think."

Davies' early Parliamentary life was much chequered by conflicts with the attendants in the lobby. There are a good many of them there, and it took him some weeks to convince them individually that he was not the carpenter come to ease a door or nail down the matting. Davies was never offended at this mistake, only feeling the inconvenience of having to explain it to so many. All that has passed now, and he is known, both in and out of the House, as one of its most modest and most genuine members, who never speaks on a subject with which he is not thoroughly acquainted, and who never sits down without having first imparted to the House some shrewd observation or some humorous notion. One night very recently, when the House had been wasting its time for hours over a discussion on the Prisons Bill, occupying itself with sentimentally inquiring as to what measure of tenderness was a prisoner's due, Davies brought it back to a comprehension of the

true state of affairs by reminding it that "nobody need go to prison unless he liked, and that nobody wanted to have people in prison; but if some people would go there, they must not be too nice about the treatment they receive."

This is what the Envoy from far-off Kashgaria saw to-night when a question of vital interest to India was under discussion, a discussion presently threatened with a sudden conclusion by the House being counted out. But ere this happened the Envoy had left, his mind flooded with a new light on the subject of British interest in India.

June 16. — Mr. Whalley and the Unhappy Nobleman. A curious table might be formed of the varying phases by which Whalley has, during his Parliamentary career, referred to "the unhappy nobleman." Early in the course of his championship he was accustomed to call him "Sir Roger." The House would not stand that, and in order to be allowed to speak at all, Whalley was fain to change it, and to call him "the prisoner at Dartmoor." There was also an epoch when he loftily alluded to him as "the convict known as Arthur Orton." At present his habitude is to refer to him as "a certain prisoner." In the same way Whalley avoids direct reference to the Jesuits, whom he is content to indicate as a "foreign influence."

June 19.—Cabinet pensions. Gladstone has taken steps publicly to contradict the report that he is in receipt of a pension of £2,000 a year. This refers, of course, to the Cabinet pensions. There are only four of them, and they are now held by Beaconsfield, Walpole, Sir George Grey, and Milner Gibson. The qualification for the pension is a declaration that the recipient is otherwise unable to maintain the dignity of his position as an ex-Minister of the Crown; and the award rests with the Ministry in power when one of the pensions becomes vacant. It so happens just now that two are held by Liberals and two by Conservatives. Perhaps, however, it may be as well to explain, to avoid misconception, that Beaconsfield does not draw his pension, it becoming merged in the salary when the pensioner takes office. So that really only three now draw the pensions—two Liberals and one Conservative.

June 20.—“The Divine Williams.” Like each of his six brothers and his uncle, the member for Malton, the Liberal candidate for Hunts, is a William as well as a Fitzwilliam. Another cherished family appellation is that of Mary, the five sisters of the former representative of Wicklow possessing it as a second name. “And how are the Divine Williams?” the late Disraeli used to ask Earl Fitzwilliam when he met him. Since he has himself become a peer Lord Beaconsfield feels that nobility is not to be made the subject of low jesting. But he must have his joke, and it now takes the milder form of the assertion that the noble family of Fitzwilliams is so enthusiastically Protestant that they would perpetuate at the baptismal font the reign of William and Mary.

June 22. — Lord Hartington votes for the County Franchise Bill. There were very few questions on the paper, and as early as half-past four Trevelyan found an opportunity of moving his resolutions. The first declared that it is desirable to adopt a uniform Parliamentary franchise for borough and county constituencies. The second affirmed that it would be desirable to redistribute political power and to obtain a more complete representation of the opinion of the electoral body. Referring to the familiar character of the resolution, which has assumed the position of an annual motion, Trevelyan declared that so long as grievances which more or less affect three-fifths of the population of the United Kingdom remain undenied and unredressed, there would be always found men who were not to be deterred from reintroducing the subject by fear of being considered tiresome.

Dilke addressed himself chiefly to the second resolution, which he supported by the citation of a large number of interesting statistics showing how greatly needed is the proposed reform. Smollett, in opposing the resolutions, took the opportunity of delivering a short dissertation on what he described as sections of the Liberal party, declaring on the whole a preference for the Whigs, with whom he had, he said, so much similarity of feeling that he liked to treat the Constitution to homœopathic doses of reform, avoiding drastic purgatives. The debate was continued by Stansfeld. Up to this time the House had been pretty full, both the front benches holding

their full complement, a notable absentee being Gladstone; but at the approach of the dinner hour the House rapidly thinned, and shortly before eight o'clock, Gladstone, standing in the gallery, and surveying the House, beheld Goldney addressing fourteen members.

Two hours later the House filled again, and Goschen, rising at eleven o'clock, had a full audience. In an animated speech, much cheered from the Conservative benches, he, "believing that the phase which the question had reached made reticence unpatriotic," declared against the resolution. After a maiden speech from O'Donnell, and a criticism of Goschen's speech by Mundella, the Chancellor of the Exchequer agreed with Goschen in the principle he had laid down, that it was the duty of every man to speak out on this question. Thus regarding his duty, Northcote, speaking on behalf of the Government, said, "We are unable to accept the principles laid down in these resolutions; on the contrary, we deny their reasonableness or their truth." This, he added, amid Ministerial cheers, is not the time to be entering upon great Constitutional changes. To accept the resolutions would be to embark without a chart upon a great, a wide, and a strong sea.

Hartington, rising at twenty minutes past twelve, was received with loud cheers from the Liberal benches, the applause being renewed and prolonged when he declared his intention of departing from the course he had hitherto taken and of voting for the resolutions. At one o'clock the House divided on the first resolution, which was rejected by 276 to 220. The Opposition in a body voted in the affirmative. Lowe and Goschen voted with the minority. The second resolution was not put.

The straight tip
on the County
Franchise "Sel-
ling Stakes."

Sir Wilfrid Lawson has been dropping into poetry again. The following verses from his pen are making the round of the House to-night:—

"Let them in," cried George Trevelyan,
"There are just about a million;"
"Never! never! keep them out,"
Answered Smollett with a shout;

Hugessen, the syllogistic,
Made a speech quite Communistic;
Like a storm upon the ocean
Raged the furious foaming Goschen ;

Northcote, puzzled what to do,
Held the balance pretty true ;
Hartington, arrived from dinner,
Made a bet " he'd name the winner."

Loud we cheered his bold decision,
And we took a great division,
And, although we lost that heat,
Were not very badly beat.

We have made a good beginning,
And we're sure to end by winning ;
For Lord Beaconsfield has got
In his stalls a curious lot.

Some, no doubt, are steeds of mark ;
Some are " screws," but some are " dark."
Still, I know a thing or two,
Which I prophesy 'll come true.

Mark my words, and note the dodge,
Dizzy means to win with " Hodge."
When all's ripe, beyond a doubt,
" The Stable " mean to bring him out.

And send him spinning o'er the course
Beating every other horse,
Carrying the Tory " tin,"
" Meant " for mischief, backed to win.

Beating every Liberal hobby
That e'er cantered through the Lobby,
Backed by Northcote, Hardy, Hunt,
Tories of the very front ;

Backed by Manners, Beach, and Cross,
Firm believers in the " hoss " ;
Backed by Holker and by Giffard
(Surely *they* have never differed)

And—my news is quite authentic—
 Backed by Adderley and Bentinck!
 Backed by "educated" Teries—
 Those in whom the Premier glories.

At least I mean, by every one
 Who can "get his money on."
 Our's the duty to defeat them,
 Our's the mission high to beat them;

Prompt and bold must be our action
 To outwit the dangerous faction;
 We must send to "Hodge's" stable
 Some one strong, and bold, and able.

Some one in the cause who's hearty,
 To steal him for the Liberal Party.
 Noble sportsman, now's the minute,
 If you're anxious to be in it.

Make your bets, your money lodge,
 Lay your 5 to 1 on Hodge.

July 2.—Sir Chas.
 Forster in search
 of a petition.

With the thermometer at 80 degrees in the shade, with the browning earth gasping for rain, and with the pavements glowing in the sun, Sir Charles Forster is something to be thankful for. At this season of the year Christopher Sykes is not to be despised, as, arrayed in dove-coloured clothing, he passes along the corridors, or stands at the Bar and surveys the House. Regarded from a distance, when the sun is shining upon him, Sykes conveys the general impression that he is a flag of truce. Monk, in his celebrated dusty suit—which, through several sessions, the House has been accustomed to behold about Midsummer—spoils the generally pleasing effect by his similitude to a miller who has satisfactorily disposed of a consignment of grain. Moreover, one gets tired of seeing the same suit session after session. Such is the passion for variety implanted in the human breast that there came a time (it was at the close of a decade) when even Lowe's Inverness wrapper became a weariness to the eye and a dolour to the soul.

Charles Forster has the advantage over others, inasmuch as it is not owing to the tailor's art or taste that he bears along with him the gift of mitigating the climatic oppression. To see him moving about the House, in the lobby, or down the corridors, with hat in hand, a flush on his brow, and a gentle but regular cadence of puffing going on, is much better than iced claret or a squeezed lemon. The calamities of our friends always have a soothing effect on our minds, and to behold Forster so uncompromisingly hot suggests that, after all, the heat is for us not really so unbearable as we thought it was before we met him.

It is a peculiarity of the good Chairman of the Committee on Petitions that it is not alone in the summer months he is accustomed to perambulate the precincts of the House with his hat in his hand. On a bleak day of February I have met him mooning across the octagon hall, always with his hat in his hand, and that curious expression on his face which suggests that he has lost half a sovereign, and is retracing his steps in search of it.

What he passes his life in looking for nobody knows, though the generally accepted belief is, that many years ago he lost a petition, and feeling deeply how essential to the maintenance of the British Empire is the due assortment and record of petitions received in the House of Commons, he has ever since been looking out for the missing document. Lowe, who is of an irritable turn of mind, and gets unreasonably annoyed when Sir Charles goes pottering about the front Opposition bench, says he is none other than the Wandering Jew, and that he is compelled to roam restlessly up and down, treading on people's toes, upsetting cherished glasses of water, and driving half-mad members who want to get a little quiet sleep after dinner. Whatever be the explanation, the fact remains that the amiable baronet, whom everybody likes, spends a good many hours of the Parliamentary session in perambulation.

On Tuesday night, when the discussion of the Paterson case was on, Sir Charles had a very bad attack, and nearly drew upon himself the rebuke of the Speaker. He came in about ten o'clock, his dress indicating that he had been out to dinner. Standing at the Bar for some minutes, he looked vaguely round in search of the petition. Not finding it floating in the air, he

strolled down the House and seated himself on the steps of the gangway by the Treasury bench, at the end of which Sir James Elphinstone was slumbering. Probably "from information received," Sir Charles suspected that the petition had been deposited under the Treasury bench, behind the screen of legs provided by her Majesty's Ministers. A long and careful scrutiny convinced him of his error, and, rising, he dejectedly crossed the House and sat next to Robert Anstruther, evidently attracted by a bundle of papers projecting from that gentleman's coat-tail pocket, and, to a mind not engrossed by a single object, fearfully suggestive of a collection of prepared jokes presently to be fired off at a suffering House.

Having convinced himself that even this was not the missing document, he next, with face full of anxious thought, moved down to the table, and began diligently searching among the papers laid thereon. He stood there for fully three minutes, and was so engrossed in the search that, though few men are better acquainted with the etiquette of the House, he braved the rule which makes it a misdemeanour for two Members to be on their feet at the same time. Again disappointed, he disappeared behind the Speaker's chair, and, when everybody thought he had gone, suddenly he was found standing at the Bar precisely in the same attitude he had presented himself a quarter of an hour earlier, and still looking vaguely round for the petition.

He had simply been for a walk round the corridor with the unknown something on his mind and nothing whatever on his head; and only a fresh wrinkle on his brow, a sadder expression on his face, indicated how deeply he felt the renewed disappointment.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE STATIONERY OFFICE SCANDAL.

Sir William Harcourt under a Cloud—Not going Home till Morning—*Tête-à-tête* with Dr. Tait—The new Black Rod—One of the Things One would rather not have said—A Scandal in the Stationery Office—Lord Beaconsfield on his Defence.

July 3.—Sir William Harcourt under a cloud.

Harcourt politically is in a state of torpor. Time was when he filled a considerable figure, not only in his own estimation (that is a condition of affairs which probably remains undisturbed), but in the estimation of the House of Commons. It was the period when he sat below the gangway, and used, with rare impartiality, to twit Disraeli or thwart Gladstone. As a lawyer deeply versed in Constitutions, and specially qualified to direct Senates, he occasionally felt it his duty to deliver orations on important topics, in the course of which he put everybody right and settled everything generally. These efforts were, however, his failures. He was best at skirmishing attacks, and, standing on that prosperous borderland between two contending factions—a position which doubles a man's power by giving him an opportunity of striking out indifferently right or left—the late Mr. Vernon Harcourt distinguished himself, and was always a welcome interloper in more serious debate. He had sat long at the feet of the Gamaliel who is now sunk in the obscurity of the House of Lords, and had learned a great many of his tricks of manner and of speech. The best proof of his success is found in the fact that he was, in the course of time, invited by Gladstone to step across the gangway and take his seat on the Treasury bench.

The bait was a tempting one, and Mr. Vernon Harcourt was not able to resist the temptation of swallowing it. But it has proved as fatal to him as the bit of scarlet cloth sometimes proves to the insatiable cod. Sir William Harcourt, become Solicitor-General, has not a tenth part of the influence in the

House of Commons that Mr. Vernon Harcourt, plain member for Oxford, was accustomed to wield. The Treasury bench is the grave of many Parliamentary reputations. Men who, speaking from below the gangway, are accustomed to feel themselves somebodies, soon learn the fact that they are mere nothingness when salaried and docketed as units among her Majesty's Ministers. There is a double influence at work in this direction. There is something in the air they breathe, and there is something in the atmosphere through which they are regarded by the House. C. S. Read felt this, and took early steps towards delivering himself from his gilded bondage. None have suffered more in this direction than the successor of Mr. Vernon Harcourt. Whether the change be permanent remains to be seen. But, in the meanwhile, there is something melancholy, to those who remember former triumphs, to find Harcourt dolefully uttering ponderous witticisms in a half-empty and wholly unappreciative House.

July 3.—Not going home till morning. "Demme!" exclaimed Sir Charles Wetherell, when leaving the House of Commons at five o'clock one morning during the debates on the Reform Bill, now nearly half a century ago, "if I had known it was raining, I would have given them another division or two."

No such regret tempered the perfection of the satisfaction of O'Connor Power as he left the House five minutes ago. The sun was shining brightly through a sky as yet unclouded by London smoke. The birds were singing in the unaccustomed quietude of the garden in the square. The dew glistened brightly on the shortly cropped grass, and the statues, which put to shame the minor beauties of Westminster Abbey, were yet damp with their morning bath. Everything was fresh and bright and vigorous after a night's rest, and in prospect of another day's work; everybody, save the thirty legislators who wearily tramped across the yard with dulled eyes and haggard cheeks, and brains dizzy with continuous perambulation of the lobbies.

"It was the kettle began it," if, in using a familiar quotation, I shall not be suspected of lack of respect for her Majesty's Secretary of State for War. But there are some circumstances

under which a kettle can no more help boiling over than gunpowder can refrain from explosion if a lighted match be put to it. For many hours Gathorne Hardy had sat on the Treasury bench, waiting for an opportunity to go into Committee of Supply. It was not the first experience of the sort. It was, in fact, one of a succession of similar trials of the spirit. Just before midnight the desired opportunity had come, and reasonable progress was being made, when O'Connor Power rose and wanted to know why it was that Ireland was not allowed to have Volunteers? The question, though interesting in itself, was not pertinent to the business immediately under consideration, and Gathorne Hardy made no response. This naturally excited the ire of the Home Rulers. They are themselves such models of courtesy, such pinks of politeness, that any deviation from the highest standard of courtesy is naturally distasteful. It was resented accordingly, and thereupon was introduced the motion to report progress, with which miserable Ministers having charge of public business are too familiar.

For all that followed, Stanley, the Financial Secretary of the War Office, is largely responsible. Partly from a generous desire to bring forward a young colleague, partly because he was himself tired out, and partly because Stanley was understood to know something about the subject, Gathorne Hardy put up the Financial Secretary to reply to some criticisms on the direction of the militia force. Stanley's intention was good, but his command of language is not extensive. In fact, the ordinary relative position of words and speakers is reversed in the case of this budding statesman. So far from having a command of language, language piteously commands him. Shortly after he rises to address the House, he strays into a thicket of words, and there is irretrievably lost. It is evident he would get out and make a finish of his journey if it were possible. But he no more sees the end of his sentences or whither they are leading him, than does his unhappy audience—perhaps not quite so clearly. The further he goes the more involved he gets. Words start up under his feet, and he stumbles over them. They shoot across his pathway, bramble-wise, and lacerate his face. Thus bruised and bewildered, he scrambles on till at last he accidentally sees an opening in the thicket, by which he gratefully darts out and resumes his seat,

leaving the House considerably more in doubt as to the matter on which they want an explanation, than they were when he rose to explain it.

Thus it was last night. Stanley, like Sterne's starling, "could not get out," and beat about the bush for nearly three-quarters of an hour, during which time, under a happier dispensation, the House might have been in Committee.

At half-past one this morning the House was in full conflict, a hundred members on the one side, and five on the other—that is, five if you count the Major only as one. Both sides were exasperated to the utmost pitch, to which desirable end O'Donnell had contributed a speech of three-quarters of an hour's duration. With bountiful and contumaciously curled hair, impartially distributed over his forehead, with spectacles warranted to glare fiercely on the Saxon, with much beating together of hands, and with a general aspect and manner suggestive of a recent escape from an asylum, O'Donnell talked inconsequential nothingness to the House of Commons.

Sturdy Locke, who has a curious habit (probably not unconnected with professional duties) of turning up at midnight, had the good fortune, sitting on the front Opposition bench below the gangway, to have a considerable portion of this incoherent eloquence poured directly into his right ear. Perhaps it was this excited his indignation to a pitch above that of the average member. However it be, Locke, with something more than Parliamentary frankness, turning upon O'Donnell, said, indicating precisely whom he meant by a nod of the head—

"As for this one, I never saw him before, and I hope to heaven I may never see him again!"

Loud cheers greeted this sally, and O'Donnell had the satisfaction of feeling that within a week he had out-Biggared the member for Cavan, and had out-Parnelled Parnell.

It was a curious scene at half-past two o'clock this morning, the light of daybreak streaming through the windows, and paling the abundant gaslight. Harcourt, who had entered the House shortly before one o'clock, having apparently been engaged upon some Parliamentary Committee where evening dress was *de rigueur*, had the front Opposition bench all to himself, and had, as is his wont at this festive hour of the morning, several times addressed the Committee. On the

Treasury bench the Chancellor of the Exchequer sat, supported by Hardy, Cross, the indefatigable W. H. Smith, the eloquent Lord Barrington, and the lively John Manners. The benches were thinly sprinkled with a hundred members, Parnell, O'Connor-Power, and O'Donnell sitting together on the second bench below the gangway, whilst the Major spread himself out on the front bench, for the better convenience of walking out during the many divisions. The Strangers were gone, save two determined men. In the Speaker's Gallery sat Shiel, wide awake, and Callan, fast asleep.

Locke's speech had imparted some liveliness to the proceedings; but the level was decidedly dull. Now and then a flame burst forth in some part of the House, and after furiously fizzing, went out. For one of these explosions Blake was responsible. He had brought down an extract from a speech made by Parnell at a public meeting some weeks earlier, at which that gentleman had abused the House of Commons, and personally insulted the Speaker. The member for Meath wanted to wriggle out of this, but Blake was too much for him. He writhed and dashed himself against Blake with some such result as an angry and untrained man might dash himself against the fists of an experienced boxer. It seems that in making reference to the Speaker, Parnell had guarded himself by the use of the expression, "*If* I were to say that," and thereupon saying it. The accuracy of Blake's recollection being called into question, the report itself was forthcoming, and read aloud.

"Ah," said Parnell, triumphantly, "*if*, you see; I said *if*."

Then came a deep and familiar voice from the other side of the House. The Admiral was observed to throw his body about. His hands went deep down into his pocket. His knees were thrown up on the bench before him. Not a muscle of his face was seen to move, but the exclamation—

"SHABBY!"

which reverberated through the House, could have come from none but him.

At half-past two one hundred and one voted in the majority against the obstructionists. In the next division this was reduced by the defection of a member, and for the two next divisions the number marshalled against the indomitable five

was one hundred. Naturally, it was thought that this majority would further decrease as the hours rolled by, and when, some time after three o'clock, the figures were read out, "For the motion, five; against, one hundred and one," a loud cheer broke forth. It was Agg-Gardner who thus, at a critical moment, had come to the rescue of the State. Driving home from a ball, he had observed, to his great surprise, the light still burning in the clock tower. With that uncompromising obedience to the calls of duty which ever distinguishes this rising politician, he at once ordered his unwilling coachman to turn into Palace Yard, and finding how matters stood, he placed his vote at the disposition of his chiefs and his country.

And the Major? Well, the Major early in the morning saw that a great struggle was at hand, and, like an old campaigner, he made his arrangements accordingly. One thing was clear to his mind—that he must sit it out. But it was also beyond question that the weather was exceedingly hot, that a long day had already been gone through, and that if he were to spend the watches of the night in walking about the lobbies of the House, he must not unnecessarily waste his energies. Accordingly he planted himself on the front Opposition bench below the gangway, as near to the door as possible, so as to shorten the journeys, if it were only by a single pace. Then, taking account of the necessity of saving his breath, he determined to take no part in the verbal contest, confining his efforts to occasionally answering the Admiral's volleys of "Oh! oh!" with a broadside of "Hear! hear!" Lastly, he folded his arms, and, with his hat cocked on one side, so as to present a truculent appearance to the enemy, he adroitly took advantage of the intervals between the divisions to get a little sleep.

Here, where midnight had left him, daybreak found him—at the post of duty. As the sun mounted in the heavens and began to shine through the windows of the House, there was presented to the eyes of all who were awake a natural phenomenon not often witnessed. Men travel hundreds of miles, and do themselves despite in the way of getting up in the dead of the night, to see the sun rise on Mont Blanc or Snowdon. But what are these sights compared with the spectacle of the sun rising on Mount O'Gorman? Slowly the gas-light pales in the glass

roof of the House. A dull, cold light fills the chamber. It grows warmer and brighter, and presently a timid ray of sunlight breaks in, settling on the top of the Major's hat, flashes for a moment, and is gone. But it has only fled to tell its companions that it has found the Major, and back they come in thousands, till a shaft of light reveals the upper half of the Major's hat.

Slowly the shaft broadens, till the massive brow is revealed beneath the overhanging hat-brim. The minutes pass on. The sun mounts higher. The shaft of light grows more perpendicular, and the Admiral, glancing across, trembles as he catches a gleam from the Major's eye, glowing with the light of battle. Higher and higher rises the sun, lower and lower falls the light; till, passing over the twitching mouth, and falling on the manly chest, heaving with strange emotions, it creeps down to his very feet, and the Major sits revealed, glorified in the fresh light of the young day.

July 4. — *Tête-à-tête* with Dr. Tait.

Dr. Tait is not the sort of man from whom one would expect keen appreciation of a rough joke.

Yet his Grace of Canterbury tells with much gusto a good story against himself. Riding down to the House on the day after the critical division on Lord Harrowby's amendment on the Burials Bill, a gentleman, who found it necessary to prop himself up against the lamp-post as he offered a few remarks, broke in upon his reverie by calling out—

"Hallo! Archbishop—hic!—warabout the Burials—hic!—Bill, now?"

July 5.—The new Black Rod.

Sir William Knollys is making approaches towards that perfection of Black-Rod gait which the lamented Sir Augustus Clifford had attained. But he has yet much to learn. He advances up the floor of the House of Commons pretty well save for a too-solemn slowness, which suggests that he has come with a message from the undertaker's, instead of the House of Lords, an impression confirmed by the funereal silence with which the House watches his movements. Also there is a tone of sadness in his recitative, which makes the ladies in the gallery instinctively take out their pocket-handkerchiefs. It is in the strategic retreat, however, that the gallant

General chiefly fails. His fixed stare, the evident motion of his lips as he counts the steps, his cautious backward reach, and his total inability to preserve a straight line, go to make up an irresistibly comic spectacle.

To-night the House of Commons behaved with commendable self-command all through the performance, till Black Rod showed a disposition to land in the corner seat where Fawcett sat, all unconscious of the approaching catastrophe. Then they burst into a roar of laughter, while the General, still steadfastly fixing his agonised gaze on the top of the Speaker's chair, his legs yet cautiously feeling their way backwards, gratefully disappeared through the portals of the House.

July 6.—One of the things one would rather not have said. That was a charming distinction which the Financial Secretary for War made to-night, when replying on Colonel Naghten's motion relating to one of the recommendations of the Militia Committee. Speaking of a witness, the gallant Stanley said—

“Although he gave his evidence in a straightforward and manly way, it agreed with the views of his Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief.”

The “although” is very good, though somewhat hard on H.R.H.

July 16.—A scandal in the Stationery Office. On the motion to go into Committee of Supply, John Holms called attention to the appointment of a Mr. Pigott to the Controllershship of her Majesty's Stationery Office, and moved a resolution declaring that, having regard to the recommendations made in 1874 by the Select Committee on Public Departments, such appointment is calculated to diminish the usefulness and influence of Select Committees, and to discourage the zeal of officials employed in the public departments of the State. Holms showed that from his former experience Pigott could know nothing of the duties to which he was appointed, his chief recommendation appearing to be that he is the son of a former rector of the parish of Hughenden, in which the residence of the Prime Minister is situated.

The motion having been seconded from the Conservative side by Mellor, the Chancellor of the Exchequer defended the

appointment, on the ground that Pigott's qualifications had been carefully considered by Lord Beaconsfield, and it had appeared to him that he was a proper person to be Controller of the Stationery Office.

The discussion was continued by Childers, Mitchell Henry, Gathorne Hardy, Watkin Williams (who roundly denounced the business as "a job"), Bates (who, with the exception of Ministers, was the only Conservative who opposed the resolution), George Balfour, Mundella, and Rainald Knightley, who said that, having come down to the House with an unprejudiced mind, he must, after what he had heard, vote in favour of the resolution.

The House divided, and when on the return of the tellers the paper was handed to Holms, indicating that he had the majority, prolonged cheering greeted this conclusion of the controversy. On the figures being announced, showing 156 for the motion and 152 against, the cheering was renewed.

July 19. — Lord Beaconsfield on his defence. This evening the House of Commons has gone into the House of Lords, and familiar faces are to be found there, piled in serried rows in the galleries flanking those set apart for the accommodation of strangers, huddled together in a close mass at the Bar, and displayed more formally, but under circumstances of scarcely less pressure, in the space before the throne. Noble lords, sedulously trained to pass through life without displaying traces of emotion, show some evidence of interest. The benches are almost crowded, and Redesdale, sitting before the table, and conveying to the uneducated stranger the general impression that he will presently go out and bring in the tea on a butler's tray, is squeezed up in his seat at the table by three noble lords who are afflicted with deafness and dominated by a desire to "hear Dizzy."

For it is he, erewhile the delight, if not the ornament, of the House of Commons, who is about to make a speech. For long months he has sat silent on the broad-bottomed red-cushioned Ministerial bench, with Richmond providentially interposed as a sort of buffer between him and his much-loved colleague, Salisbury. He has sat and listened, and dozed, and gone away to dinner, thinking, peradventure, with a grim smile, of how, "in another place," dinner means to distressed Ministers only a brief interval

between question-time and a long bickering with Biggar or a tedious parleying with Parnell.

Here, in this gilded chamber, in which they have given up to ornament what was meant for comfort, the ghost of the late Mr. Disraeli reposes, labelled "Lord Beaconsfield." Between the Shade and the familiar Substance of last year and innumerable years that went before there is not much outward difference. As compared with Mr. Disraeli, Lord Beaconsfield is a trifle more pallid in the face, the wrinkles are a thought deeper, the eye is a shade less bright, and the artistic thinning of the still curiously abundant hair indicates the conviction that when a man has passed threescore years and ten baldness need not make him abashed. Otherwise the illustrious Shade is but the Substance labelled with a new name, and set up in another place. "Lord Beaconsfield," entering the House of Lords, pulls himself up on the threshold in much the same manner as he was wont to do when, after stalking through the division-lobbies, "Mr. Disraeli" carefully prepared himself for jauntily strolling down the floor of the House of Commons till such time as he might reach a particular spot, where, on one side of the table or the other, he has, ever since the new Houses of Parliament were built, paused and bent his head with lowly grace to the majesty of the Speaker.

There is no one to bow to in the House of Lords, so Beaconsfield, pulling himself up on the threshold, and steadying himself with a shrug of his shoulders, walks across the carpeted floor (past the throne, where, with uplifted but swordless scabbard, he erewhile proudly conducted his Sovereign to open Parliament), and takes his seat on the Treasury bench, careful that a space, presently to be filled by Richmond, lies between him and the black-browed "master of flouts and gibes and sneers." Once seated, he crosses his legs, carefully disposes his coat-tails across his thighs, folds his arms, bends his head, and to all appearance is, mentally, as remote from the House of Lords as if he were in the Straits of Malacca.

The Lord Chancellor is already seated on the woolsack, and some cursory remarks are made about a Bill not wholly unconnected with gas, or sewage, or water. Then, recovering his position, and placing a hand on either knee, Beaconsfield glances at the Lord Chancellor, and rising with another shrug of his

shoulders, as if the machinery had got out of joint when placed in a seated position, and must needs be readjusted, he approaches the table.

What he is going to talk about everybody knows. What he shall say, and how he will say it, are matters of quickest interest in the crowded chamber.

From the steps of the throne Gathorne Hardy looks confidently towards his chief, certain in his capacity to make the worse appear the better reason. Further back in the crowd, and raised above it by a step of the throne, Sandon gazes north into space. Lower down, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, spectacled and grave, awaits with evident curiosity to hear how the Premier will acquit himself in the performance of a task in which he, honest man, ludicrously failed. Cross is also there, with perpetually pleased expression, looking round perkily at the Lords as if he were saying, "Well, come what will of this unfortunate business, the Prisons Bill is passed." Of the chiefs of the Opposition only Goschen shows himself here, and with his eyeglass imbedded in his eye, restlessly looks from side to side as if he were not quite certain which was Beaconsfield among the dimly sighted peers.

There is no one to cry "God bless him!" when the Premier rises; and he begins his speech amid a chilling silence that must have sent a pang to the heart of the Admiral, who, having secured a front seat in the gallery over the bar, by firm application of his right hand to nose and chin sedulously keeps his mouth closed, and strangles in their birth the strident cheers. That the Admiral managed to sit it through, and not cry out, "Hear, hear!" and that he refrained from greeting Granville's rising with a resounding "Oh!" supply evidence of remarkable self-command.

In form of speech and manner of address, the Premier is in no whit changed. We simply have Mr. Disraeli addressing the House of Lords. Here is the same untrammelled audacity, the same boldness of assertion, the same freedom in travestying the arguments and phrases of opponents, the same outward wave of the hands, the same deepening of the voice at desirable passages, and the same shrugging of the shoulders, which suggests an innuendo though it be spoken not. As a successful speech, delivered under critical circumstances, this address of

Beaconsfield's may rank with his most celebrated efforts. When he rose he was in the position of a Prime Minister accused of perpetrating a job—a Minister more than accused, one who had been tried at the Bar of the House of Commons and found guilty. When he sat down he had succeeded in conveying the impression, whether permanent or not it does not matter, that if there were a Minister of the Crown who spent days and nights in the performance even of the smallest details of his duty, this is he who now addresses this illustrious assembly.

"It has been said, in an assembly almost as classical as that I am now addressing, that the appointment was a job."

"A job!" It was worth being crushed and crowded and hustled to hear Beaconsfield simply pronounce these two words. His indignant shoulders went upwards in dumb appeal to his sympathising ears. His still plump hands were held out, palm upwards, that noble lords might see how clean they were. His eyes were widened to their utmost capacity, in astonishment at the supposition that he might be thought capable of this thing charged against him, whilst his cheeks puffed out to emit, in an almost horrifying whisper, the fearsome words—

"A job!"

But not only did Beaconsfield succeed in clearing himself. He managed to show that if there were such a being as a Heaven-born Controller of the Stationery Department, it was Mr. T. Digby Pigott. His picture of that gentleman having been placed, by the misguided impulse of the House of Commons, "in a condition of honourable but absolute destitution," was affecting in the extreme. It required no stretch of the imagination to picture Mr. T. Digby Pigott standing at the Peers' entrance in threadbare clothes, and napless hat, all brushed to distraction. It was a remarkable instance of the power of oratory to observe how, at this point, noble lords instinctively put their hands in their pockets, as if in search of stray half-crowns. That other little word-picture, of the decayed tradesman, who, if the behests of the Select Committee were too scrupulously observed, might have been placed at the head of the Stationery Department, was, for its immediate effect, inimitable. Of course, it was no argument, but Lord Beaconsfield, like the late Mr. Disraeli, is not anxious about argument if he can secure effect. To-night he triumphed

beyond hope or expectation, and, the speech over, the Commons went sadly back to their own place, lamenting the fate that had too early deprived them of one who, even with the weight of his seventy-three years, stands without a compeer.

CHAPTER XXII.

A TWENTY-SIX HOURS' SITTING.

The Major and the Speaker—"Taking down his Words"—A lively Skirmish—Mr. Gladstone ignored—Death of Ward Hunt—An Appeal—A twenty-six Hours' Sitting.

July 24. — The Major and the Speaker. On the motion to go into Committee on the South African Bill, George Campbell moved a resolution, declaring that no measure establishing a self-governing federation for South Africa will be satisfactory unless direct provision be made for the settlement of the relations of the white and black races. He chiefly took objection to the Bill on the ground that the proposed constitution gave all the power to the whites. Forster, whilst criticising some details of the Bill, expressed his approval of it as a whole, and trusted that, though late in the session, it would become law. E. Jenkins took exception to it, on the ground that proposals for a scheme of federation should come from the colonists themselves, rather than from the Imperial Government.

The discussion was continued by H. Holland, Parnell, and O'Donnell. The latter gentleman addressed the House at considerable length, and not always with appreciable relevancy to the subject matter. He also succeeded in occupying time by reading voluminous extracts from various periodicals, and members, apparently arriving at the conclusion that his intention was rather to occupy a certain number of minutes than to discuss the Bill, left him to the performance of his task. Biggar, coming in about nine o'clock, and finding this state of things existing, moved a count. That there were a large number of members in attendance was testified to by the appearance at the usual signal of nearly a hundred gentlemen, who, as

soon as the counting was over, again left the House, leaving O'Donnell to pursue his monologue. A few minutes later Biggar again moved a count, and members had scarcely got settled in the various resorts outside the House than they were brought back again by the sound of the bell.

Ten minutes later Major O'Gorman, entering the House for the first time within a space of three hours, resented the non-attendance of other members by straightway moving that the House be counted. Under ordinary circumstances the process of counting occupies seven or eight minutes, the glass being turned and the Speaker waiting till the sands have run out. On the present occasion the right hon. gentleman took the unusual course of at once rising, and even whilst the bell was ringing, counted the House, in which he had no difficulty in finding forty members. Another ten minutes having elapsed, O'Donnell, who had now been speaking for an hour, entered upon a disquisition on education in Ireland. The Speaker called his attention to the fact that he was travelling beyond the subject matter, whereupon Major O'Gorman rose, and said in an angry voice—

“I move that the House be counted.”

Having uttered these words, he hastily seized his hat, and was making his way out of the House as fast as it was possible with him, when the Speaker quietly said—

“There are forty members present. It is unnecessary to count.”

The Major, who had by this time got as far as the door, turned round and walked back to his seat, where he occupied himself in a series of attempts to test the Speaker's accuracy by counting for himself. This quiet rebuke from a high authority whose forbearance in troublesome times has excited the marvel and the admiration of the House, had the effect of stopping further interruptions, and O'Donnell, beginning to show signs of physical exhaustion, brought his sentences to a conclusion, having been speaking for two hours.

July 25.—“Taking down his words.”

The House of Commons to-day witnessed one of the most remarkable scenes presented in recent Parliamentary history. “A House” was made a few minutes earlier than usual, and business proceeded

in the ordinary course till the first order was reached, it being the Committee on the South African Bill. On the question that the preamble be postponed, O'Donnell moved to report progress, complaining chiefly of the "light, airy, perfunctory manner" in which he said Lowther had introduced the measure to the House. Lowther quietly replied, amid laughter and cheers, that during the three-quarters of an hour he had been occupied in explaining the Bill, O'Donnell had not been in his place. G. Campbell, Whalley, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer urged O'Donnell to withdraw his motion. A remark from Courtney drew from Stafford Northcote the explanatory statement that, war being apprehended amongst the South African tribes, it was urgent that the Bill should be pushed forward, and a system of federation completed.

Edward Jenkins was addressing the House when he was interrupted by an impatient exclamation from Monk, who sat just behind. Jenkins resenting this, Monk explained that he had interrupted because, in his opinion, Jenkins was abusing the forms of the House. Jenkins moved that these words be taken down, a crisis which brought Parnell to the front. In seconding the motion, he declared that the limits of endurance had been passed in respect to the language which members had addressed to him, and to others who sat near him.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer hastily rose and moved that these words be taken down. Parnell objected, blandly arguing on the point of order that a motion being already before the House, a second one could not be put. The Chairman attempted to throw oil on the waters, already growing dangerously troubled, by suggesting that Monk had had no intention of imputing malice to Jenkins, and that, on the whole, the business had better now go on.

Monk, without withdrawing the obnoxious words or even excusing them, was explaining that he had imputed no malicious intention, when Courtney rose to order. But Monk, refusing to give way, continued, concluding (having had his say) with the expression of the hope that the discussion might now cease. Courtney having repudiated an allegation, which did not appear to have been made, that he had abused the forms of the House, Parnell again rose and descanted on the intimidation to which he was subjected in the discharge of his duty. The Chair-

man called him to order, and invited him to withdraw these words, when Parnell said that the intimidation of which he complained was on the part of the Press. He continued his address amid calls to order by various members, including the Chairman. A climax was reached when he declared that he "had satisfaction in preventing and thwarting the intentions of the Government in respect of passing this Bill."

Once more the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose, and moved that Parnell's words be taken down. The disorder into which the Committee was plunged obscuring the fact that two resolutions—that of Jenkins, and Stafford Northcote's resolution (No. 1)—were already before the Committee, the clerk at the table, amid solemn silence, wrote down the words just uttered by Parnell. Raikes left the chair, the Committee having agreed that progress should be reported, and that the words used should be reported to the House. The Speaker was sent for, and having taken his seat, Raikes, standing at his right hand, fully reported the words used by Parnell, and the order of the Committee that they should be taken down.

For some time previously the House had presented its usual Wednesday afternoon's aspect, that is to say, it had been almost empty. It gradually filled as rumours of the disturbance went forth, and at this time it was about half-filled, and in a state of considerable excitement. The Chancellor of the Exchequer described at length to the Speaker the proceedings which had led up to Parnell's words being taken down, and concluded by moving a resolution to the effect that Parnell should be suspended from his functions of speaking or taking part in the debates of this House till Friday next, when he undertook to submit a motion with reference to the course of public business which, he trusted, would have the effect of facilitating its progress.

Loud and prolonged cheering greeted this conclusion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech. Amid the noise Biggar rose, but, as interposing between the Speaker and the House, he was met by loud cries of "Order." The Speaker, before proceeding further, invited Parnell to address the House if he desired, an invitation of which Parnell took no notice. Biggar, however, again manifested his desire to speak, but his rising was met by such angry cries of "Order!" that after a brief struggle he resumed his seat. The Speaker again called on Parnell,

Biggar for the third time rising, and once more subsiding, under the cries of "Order!"

At a fourth invitation, Parnell, speaking with considerable deliberation, and expressing at the outset a doubt "whether it really was of any use his addressing the House," asked—still strong on the point of order—whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer was in order in moving the resolution without giving due notice. The Speaker reminding him that he was to address himself, if he desired to speak, to an explanation of the words reported, Parnell admitted the accuracy of the report made by the Chairman with the exception that he "thought" he had used the word "interest" instead of "satisfaction." He proceeded at some length to address the House, taking occasion to note that the English nation was in the habit of bullying and oppressing weaker nations, "much in the same way," he added parenthetically, "as he was subjected to menaces from members of that House."

The Speaker now directed that these words should be taken down, and a controversy arose as to the precise phraseology, Parnell denying having used the terms generally accepted. The House, having now reached a pitch of high excitement, by loud cries demanded Parnell's withdrawal, and he walked out accordingly. The Speaker then explained that a member convicted of persistent obstruction of the business of the House was guilty of contempt, and was liable to censure and suspension from his right to take part in the proceedings of the House. Having thus explained the rule, he left it to the House to decide what steps should be taken.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer thereupon moved a resolution to the effect that "Mr. Parnell, having wilfully and persistently obstructed public business, is guilty of contempt of this House, and that Mr. Parnell for his said offence be suspended from the service of the House till Friday next." After some words from Whitbread, who suggested that the House should be content with agreeing only to the first portion of the resolution, omitting that portion which would have kept Parnell out of the House till Friday, Sullivan, whilst disclaiming holding any brief for Parnell, urged upon the House, in an eloquent speech, that they were entering upon a dangerous course in thus pushing matters to extremities.

The debate was continued by Knatchbull-Hugessen, who happened to be the sole representative present of the late Government; and finally Hardy, on the part of the Government, accepted the suggestion that the debate should be adjourned till Friday. This course was agreed to, and as the Speaker left the chair and Raikes resumed his position as Chairman of the Committee, Parnell, who had been waiting outside the issue of events, entered escorted by Biggar. Taking up the thread of his discourse, somewhere about the part at which it had been left nearly two hours earlier, he proceeded to discuss the claims of the South Africa Bill. After some debate the preamble was agreed to, and the Committee got as far as the third clause, on which Parnell had moved an amendment which Biggar was supporting, when a quarter to six was reached, and progress was necessarily reported.

July 27.—A lively skirmish. The Chancellor of the Exchequer lost his head on Wednesday, and, failing that indispensable addition to the perfect man, the House of Commons became as a seething cauldron. To-day the House meets to undo—or, at least, to do over again—the work then unwisely commenced. We should, under ordinary circumstances, have been busily engaged on the South Africa Bill, or on Supply, or on some other matter-of-fact business; in which case there would have been from five to forty members present. As it is, and there being a prospect of a row, or at least of “words,” the House is crowded in every part, and noble lords who do not have many opportunities of this kind in their own part of the building have come down to see the struggle. At their head, though not forming one of their number, is Prince Teck, who holds a pair of highly-starched cuffs over the clock, and observes with curious interest Whalley’s attempts to catch the Speaker’s eye.

As soon as the Chancellor of the Exchequer moves the formal resolution which, being passed, shall give precedence to the resolution he has substituted for that wrathfully drawn up on Wednesday, Dillwyn rises from the corner seat below the gangway and objects. It is an odd coincidence that the member for Swansea always turns up when there is a row of this sort on. He has grown grey and thin in the House of Commons, and he must be a good fellow at heart, for although he is generally

objecting to something, he is himself held to be by no means an objectionable man. . . . It soon becomes clear that Dillwyn is the spokesman of a numerous section of the House, Mitchell Henry, Anderson, O'Shaughnessy, all speaking from different points of view, and each taking exception to the haste with which the amendment has been brought on.

By the time Whalley succeeds in catching the Speaker's eye and begins his discourse, gentlemen on the front Opposition Bench begin to grow uneasy. Lowe lifts up his meek, white head from the lower part of the front Opposition Bench, where it has been reclining, and passing upwards takes his seat by Hartington, who has only been ten minutes late to-day, and who is now being earnestly talked to by Forster. On the other side is Knatchbull-Hugessen, bursting with some proposition he wants to pour into the ear of the imperturbable Chief, but cannot get at him by reason of the contortions into which the body of Forster is thrown by the working of mighty thoughts. Forster, it would seem, cannot take a clear view of a critical complication unless he be spread out as nearly as possible in a horizontal position with his chin sunk in his chest, curiously foreshortening his head. It is this difficulty which Knatchbull-Hugessen cannot get over, for Forster is not to be approached too closely at the time of these earthquakes, and the difficulty is enhanced by the possibly unconscious, but decidedly effective, determination of Hartington not to notice the fussy person who once had charge of the interests of the British Colonies.

Childers changes places with Lowe, so that he, too, may come within whispering distance of Hartington, and then Harcourt has an opportunity of uttering his counsel, Knatchbull-Hugessen all this time watching an opportunity to dive in, in a comparatively quiet moment on the part of Forster's legs, just as a boat, skilfully steered, tries for an opening in the surf, to run in and land its freight. Presently Forster rises, and everybody on the front Opposition Bench quickly withdrawing his legs, he shamles down between the bench and the table till he reaches the Speaker's chair, and holds consultation with the right hon. gentleman. This is Knatchbull-Hugessen's opportunity, and he eagerly seizes it, pouring into the ear of Hartington what is doubtless a settlement of the whole case. But his lordship sits staring at his boots, and makes no sign of recognition, and

Forster coming back, Knatchbull-Hugessen despondingly and adroitly gets out of the way, lest he should be sat upon.

Mr. Gladstone ignored. The only man on the front Opposition Bench whom nobody consults, and who offers his opinions to nobody, is he whose merest word used to be law among gentlemen, the majority of whom he has lifted from the obscurity of the rank and file of the Liberal party. Gladstone, of whom it was said two days ago that he was going down to his castellated residence in Flintshire, is here sitting lower down even than Lowe's modesty leads him. He has brought his white hat out to-day—the white hat with the black band round it—and has carefully disposed of it on a stick which he is holding out in a manner suggestive of scarecrow practice in view of a visit to the quiet fields of Hawarden. He speaks to nobody, and nobody speaks to him; and the man who disestablished the Irish Church and freed the Irish land is just now chiefly occupied in saving his cherished hat from contact with some of the reckless gentlemen who are moving to and fro, engrossed in the new phase of the question which the Opposition below the gangway has evolved.

As Whalley proceeds, and is occasionally called to order by the Speaker, there is time for the excitement to spread to the front bench opposite. Dyke has a hurried conversation with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and, disappearing, shows himself again behind the Speaker's chair, whence he beckons to Adam, and the two Whips retire for consultation.

Henley, venerable and respected patriarch, stands for a moment in deprecating attitude, and, foreseeing a long vista of purposeless talk, carefully picks his way out of the House. Then Roebuck, painfully rising from the corner seat below the gangway, slowly crawls down the floor of the House; seeing which, George Bowyer, who had been hovering at the bar, and has been serving his constituents by darting into temporarily unoccupied seats, and being incontinently dispossessed by the rightful owner, now dashes down at the corner seat. A few minutes ago Eslington having left the House to post a letter in the lobby, Sir George took his seat, which he enjoyed through four anxious moments. Then, taking up his old point of observation at the bar, like a grey eagle poised above its

prey, he became aware of the fact that Francis Conyngham, who had been sitting on the cross-benches, had gone out to speak to a friend. Sir George thereupon darted into this seat, and reclined with a vain attempt to look as if he had been there since prayer-time. But Lord Francis comes back again, and lays his lavender-gloved hand on the shoulder of the baronet, who, glancing up with a startled look, hastily regards the back of the bench, and seeing Lord Francis's name there, is quite surprised to find that the seat had been appropriated. Now he is in better quarters, for Roebuck takes a long time to traverse the House, and Sir George feels so safe that he places his hat far out on the floor of the House in front of him, which is the usual token that he is, in Parliamentary sense, At Home.

Parnell, the immediate cause of this interesting gathering, was a few minutes ago defiantly leaning with his back against the cool stone walls of the corridor, prepared to face one or all as the case might be. Now he has entered the House, paler than usual, though he wears a sickly smile, as if, on the whole, it were good fun. Biggar is in his place, greatly enjoying the excitement of the occasion, and O'Donnell, the third and newest recruit of the famous trio, has just walked in with an air of deliberation, and that *blasé* look which he understands marks the air of good society. The Major is at the back seat near the door, ready for contingencies in the way of a succession of divisions. He has just tried his voice in ironically cheering Mitchell Henry, and is evidently in fine form.

The interchange of communication between the two front benches results in a determination to stand by the resolutions, and this is announced in speeches from Hartington and Stafford Northcote, whose rising the Major cheered thunderously, and with a fine irony, the untimeliness of which is resented by angry cries of "Order!" When the Chancellor of the Exchequer sat down it might have been thought that all was over; but Peter Rylands has something to say, as, indeed, he generally has. Taking off his glasses, he desired to express that he was "anxious" to support the Government.

"Do not let them think that *we* are not embarrassed by the obstruction complained of," Peter says. "*We are* embarrassed," he repeats, in a firm voice, letting his outstretched hand fall

swiftly, but emphatically, whilst Whitwell, who sits near, looking up in his face, nods approvingly.

Even this does not settle it, nor do the speeches of several other members; nor does Andrew Lusk, who cajoling a member into lending him his seat whilst he makes a speech, holds out his white hat, waving it over the contending hosts like a flag of truce, and beseeches members, in his most imploring tone, to "come now." The House will have its division, and so divides, deciding, by an overwhelming majority, that it will begin to discuss what it might have settled in the time it was arguing whether or not it were wise to begin.

July 28.—Death of Ward Hunt. To-day after a painful illness Ward Hunt died.

His death, if it has not deprived the House of Commons of the counsel of its wisest man, has removed from its midst the familiar figure of its largest member. Fully six feet four inches in height, and broad to boot, the late First Lord of the Admiralty figured amongst his colleagues as a porpoise might disport itself in a school of herrings. Seen by himself, Major O'Gorman impresses the mind with the sense of unsurpassed largeness. But Ward Hunt, though not so much run to adipose tissue, was a bigger man than the Major, and having a straight back and a firm stride, impressed one with a sense of superior strength and vigour.

Ever so many years ago a reading party went forth to the Highlands, and was subsequently discoursed about by one of its members. From Mr. Clough's picture-gallery we get a glimpse of Ward Hunt:—

"Stoutest and rashest of creatures, mere fool of a Saxon,
Him I see frisking and whisking, and ever at swifter gyration
Under brief curtain revealing broad acres—not of broad cloth."

I dwell upon this personal peculiarity because, in an odd though not unaccountable manner, it had considerable influence upon the popular reputation and even the political career of the late First Lord. The general preference for stout men as compared with lean men, on the score of superior goodness of nature, has survived the times of Cassius. There are few prejudices stronger than the belief that a stout man must necessarily be a good-tempered man, and the notion is drawn from an ex-

perience which affords rare variations. In the case of Ward Hunt people were inclined to forgive many shortcomings on the ground that he was "so good-tempered." Even so keen an observer as the writer of the brilliant series of Political Portraits published during the winter of 1872—73, fell into this error.

"Mr. Ward Hunt, we believe," Mr. Frank Hill writes, "never provoked an adversary save by failing to lose his own temper, and by growing cooler as the opponent became more heated. His conversation is cheerful and good-humoured."

This, which expresses the general opinion of the character of Ward Hunt, is, I will venture to say, not only incorrect, but it is so directly opposed to the fact that, if it were not familiar as an article of popular faith, it might be regarded as a sneer on the part of the political portrait-painter. The truth is that precisely the reverse was the fact, and that among his colleagues the late First Lord was distinguished for an unfortunate asperity of temper, and a certain "nagging" way of answering questions or participating in debate—a constitutional tendency phenomenal in a man of Falstaffian proportions. It might reasonably be suggested that the physical suffering he bore during the current Session, and the persistent misfortune which followed his administration at the Admiralty, had the effect of souring his temper. Casting the mind back over Ward Hunt's official and ex-official career, it is not possible to accept this explanation.

It was highly characteristic of him that, at a time when there were lobby rumours of personal dissensions in Gladstone's Cabinet, he should rise from the front Opposition Bench, and ask "whether it is true that right hon. gentlemen opposite are not on speaking terms with each other?" This question, and the tone and manner in which it was put, offered an illustration of the constitutional turn of Ward Hunt's mind. Of late the First Lord had Captain Bedford Pim attached to him, much after the style that a man-o'-war might have an ineffective but annoying torpedo-boat continually hanging around, and making feints of dashing in at it. Some excuse might possibly be found for his manner of throwing over his shoulder snappish scraps of answer to the member for Gravesend. But this mode of address was simply an aggravation of a habit,

and Childers and Goschen, whilst themselves studiously courteous in their inquiries or criticism, were snapped at whenever they dared to open their mouths on naval questions.

At the very outset of his new departure as First Lord of the Admiralty, and at a time when Lord Beaconsfield's policy was one of general conciliation, Ward Hunt's ill-temper roused a nest of hornets about the Treasury Bench. He came down to the House, on a memorable Monday night, and tossed into the midst of the placid and unsuspecting assembly that little bomb-shell about "paper ships" and a "phantom fleet." He did not mean anything, as he was subsequently obliged to admit. It was only his pleasant way of saying that the Minister whom he had succeeded was a thoroughly incompetent person.

Next to Captain Bedford Pim, or perhaps on a par with him, Ward Hunt reserved his bitterest animosity and his most snarling contempt for the Press. The mere mention of a newspaper in the House of Commons was sufficient to bring him up with an angry and contemptuous expression. It was not that the newspapers, as a class, displayed any special antipathy towards him. But it is the duty of newspapers to comment upon daily events, and as it frequently happened that things went wrong at the Admiralty, it followed that the Department occupied, in an exceptional degree, the attention of the Press. Hence Ward Hunt's anger, and hence his conviction that life would be endurable only for its newspapers.

It must be admitted that Ward Hunt's reign at the Admiralty was not a successful one. But it is only fair to point out that he was hardly fairly dealt with in being placed at the head of the Department. Born a country gentleman, and gifted with abilities which admirably fitted him for the post of Chairman of Quarter Sessions, held for many years with credit to himself and advantage to the county of Northampton, he was suddenly called upon to take charge of the British Navy and all that concerns it. If it were possible for the human mind to admit the idea, it might well be thought that this was a practical joke on the part of Mr. Disraeli, akin to that which induced him to find a place in the Ministry for Cavendish Bentinck. If one had placed before him all the prominent men on the Conservative benches in the year 1874, and were asked to say which was likely to be appointed to the head of the Admiralty, the burly

Northamptonshire squire, who had made his first Parliamentary reputation in connection with the Cattle Plague, would surely have been the last to occur to the mind.

Whatever other failings may have fallen to the lot of Ward Hunt, he did not lack courage, and the post being offered him, he accepted it. Also he devoted himself to the details of his office with an energy and an industry which left nothing to be desired. But when a square stick is thrust into a round hole there will, to the end of time, be something lacking in respect of adaptability. The principal marvel in connection with Ward Hunt's administration of naval affairs is that it proved so little disastrous to the country.

As a speaker, the late First Lord had the great gift of brevity. His statements on introducing the Navy Estimates are amongst the briefest on record, a heterodoxy which, at the outset, shocked Childers, who was convinced that there was nothing to hope for from a man who could explain the Navy Estimates within the space of three-quarters of an hour. In this, however, Ward Hunt succeeded, and his exposition of the policy of his administration was, perhaps, the most creditable feature in connection with it. Even this brevity of speech arose out of his prevailing contempt for the views and opinions of people in general, and of gentlemen opposite in particular. He would have made an excellent, or at least a contented, Minister under the Czar, or the Emperor Napoleon before his Majesty's fatal craze for Parliamentary co-operation took possession of him. He could never fully understand what business Parliament had to want to know anything. It was enough for himself—and he held that it should be enough for other people—that Ward Hunt was at the head of affairs at the Admiralty; and that, in view of this circumstance, people should go asking questions and proffering criticism, appeared to him more than human nature could bear. He resented inquiry into the public business of his Department as a man might resent a personal affront, and the consequence was that his Parliamentary career was a constant wrangle.

Occasionally when his unfortunate manner had brought about a chorus of disapproval, or had culminated in a formal indictment, Ward Hunt found it necessary to make an elaborate defence. His penultimate appearance in the House of Commons

was on an occasion of this sort, and Seely will probably carry with him to his grave the scars he received at the hands of the irate First Lord, whose general policy he had presumed to call in question.

Aug. 2.—An appeal.

The following rhymes by Sir Wilfrid Lawson fairly illustrate the condition of the House, at this time overpowered by the nightmare of Obstruction.

"Oh! Parnell Mavourneen! Oh! Biggar go brag!
It's the pride and the joy of your country you are!
Sustained by O'Donnell and mighty O'Gorman,
You have broken the might of both Saxon and Norman.

"A light o'er the darkness of Erin now breaks,
You have bullied the Speaker and trampled on Raikes,
And the House, dispossessed of its prestige and vigour,
Lies low at the feet of its Parnell and Biggar.

"Oh! Parnell Mavourneen! Oh! Biggar go Bragh!
The noblest your country has sent us by far;
Through the lobby you march with a conqueror's stride,
When you've summoned your host to the cry of 'Divide.'

"Yes! we feel that at length the Celt's wrongs are revenged,
And years of oppression by you are avenged.
But, Parnell Mavourneen! and Biggar go Bragh!
While proudly you ride upon Victory's car,
Let Mercy beside 'mid your virtues appear,
And think of the state you have brought us to here.

"The Speaker, exhausted, grows daily more sad,
And Raikes, as you see, is almost driven mad.
Sclater-Booth in his figure is visibly shrinking,
And two or three members have taken to drinking.

"Oh! keep us not here in this terrible weather,
While the grouse-cocks are calling us off to the heather,
While the yacht, with its sails flapping out to the breeze,
Invites us away to the smooth summer seas.

"The clerks at the table look languid and wan,
Gloom sits on the face of the noble Lord John,
The wig of Sir Erskine is turning to grey.
Sweet Biggar—kind Parnell—please let us away!"

Aug. 1.—A twenty-six hours' sitting.

The difficulty of defining what Home Rule really is, and what it precisely means, has always cropped up when the matter has been debated in the House of Commons. The difficulty no longer exists. After

the experience of the last twenty-six hours it is clear enough that Home Rule means not going home all night yourself, and keeping as many other people as possible out of their beds. To this laudable endeavour, this high political end, O'Donnell, Parnell, Biggar, and O'Connor Power seriously set themselves last night. They had come down in the ordinary way, prepared to obstruct the passage through Committee of the South Africa Bill. At the outset they were puzzled by a curiously elate expression on the face of their natural enemy, the Saxon. Puleston, in particular, walked about with a pleased smile, whilst there was a dangerously amiable look on the expressive countenance of Lowther, as he sat with his hat well pushed back, so that not a line of his expansive forehead should be lost to the contemplation of Biggar.

What it all meant was speedily made manifest. The Ministerialists had determined to beat the Obstructionists at their own game, and to that end Dyke had issued a whip, mysteriously indicating that there might be a prolonged sitting. In brief, the Ministerialists had consented to be told off in "watches," and preparations were made for sitting till the Bill was passed through Committee, or till the arrival of the visitor from the Antipodes, whose name O'Connor Power had in the earlier discussions boastfully invoked.

This plan took the Obstructionists at a great disadvantage. Never at any period of the Session had their small forces been so weak. The Major, content with the glory he earned on Friday night, when he had so triumphantly criticised the phraseology of the resolutions "designed to put down" obstruction, had wisely gone home, determined not to weaken the effect of this great triumph by comparative success. Richard Power had also left for Ireland, and "W. H. isky" O'Sullivan, as his compatriots humorously call him, was at the moment engaged, hundreds of miles away, in obtaining information as to the alleged deterioration of pure Irish spirit by demoralised Scotch.

At a council of war hastily summoned it was decided by the Obstructionists that, despite these conditions, battle should be accepted. Despatches were immediately sent off to Ireland for reinforcements, the Major being specially requested to return forthwith, as it was felt that in fighting by a system of relays

he would count for two. Parnell and O'Donnell undertook to keep the enemy engaged until one o'clock in the morning. Then Biggar and O'Connor Power were to come on, whilst Gray and Nolan were prepared to act as skirmishers, harassing the enemy and picking off an officer as opportunity offered.

The plan of the campaign being thus arranged, the fire opened, O'Donnell making a reconnaissance in force, by moving to report progress as soon as the House got into Committee. This had the effect of aggravating members, and matters soon grew lively. At eight o'clock Parnell, pale and passionate, was trying his voice against the united roar of the Committee, who insisted upon a division. Julian Goldsmid, seated immediately below him, so persistently raised a strident voice in the chant for the division that, after glaring down for a moment of speechless anger at the back of his head, Parnell made a sudden dash at the table, and standing at Raikes' left ear, attempted to pour his speech into it. Two seats behind, Whalley, moved by some inscrutable purpose, was constantly on his feet, rising to points of order. What he precisely wanted to accomplish, nobody gathered amid the uproar. But from a chance expression it appeared that he was animated by the benevolent intention of having either Parnell or O'Donnell twice called to order, when he would have tested the efficacy of the new rule.

After this little scene matters went on quietly till eleven o'clock, when Harcourt came in from dinner. He had not been in his place many minutes before he seized an opportunity of stirring up Parnell with a long pole, and the Committee had once more the satisfaction, now somewhat palling on the accustomed palate, of seeing that gentleman glaring upon the laughing throng through angry eyes, set in a face of death-like pallor.

At one o'clock in the morning Parnell moved that progress be reported, a mild suggestion supported by Fawcett in a speech of some length. Lowther answered blandly that the Chairman would leave the chair only when the Bill had been passed through Committee.

This was the end of the skirmishes and of masked attacks. The real line of battle, never seriously obscured, being now plainly announced, the combatants prepared for the worst. The House was full, and on both sides there reigned a determination to die on the floor if necessary, or in any event to sleep there.

Forster, stretching his legs far out on the horizon, lay down on the front Opposition Bench, and, refreshing himself by rumpling his hair all over, settled himself for a few minutes' sleep. The Chancellor of the Exchequer sat watchful and unperturbed on the opposite bench, supported right and left by Hicks-Beach and Cross, the group suggesting under the circumstances a modern and Parliamentary "Laöcoon." Nolan bustled in and out as if the Thames were rapidly rising, and he were the cellarman engaged in reporting the advances of the flood. O'Connor Power, finding a general disposition to somnolency, woke up the Committee by a genial reference to the action of the majority as being "a conspiracy." This brought up Harcourt in his happiest mood, and in a moment the erewhile sleeping House was in a blaze of excitement. Also, it would appear that the water in the cellars of the House was providentially, and *pari passu*, growing higher. Nolan bustled about more like a bomb-shell than a Member of Parliament.

He had a turn to himself later on, or rather earlier in the morning. Edward Jenkins, an unquestionable authority on matters of decorum and good taste, took an opportunity of expressing, what every one feels, a sense of astonishment that Captain Nolan, a gentleman of education and position, and, moreover, an officer on full pay in Her Majesty's service, should prominently associate himself in a political warfare of a kind that naturally enough commends itself to Biggar and Parnell. This rebuke had an extraordinary effect upon the Admiral, who, it goes without saying, was in his place. He cheered stentoriously, and Nolan, firing over the head of Jenkins, played the battery of his denunciation full on the Admiral, whose intelligent political discrimination he called in question. The Admiral winced under the shot; but he had his answer ready.

"Half-pay," he said, rising, and attempting to interrupt the torrent of speech which Nolan was breathlessly pouring forth. "HALF-pay," he shouted, "I'm only on half-pay."

The Committee saw the point in a moment, and cheered enthusiastically. An officer on full pay is under certain political obligations, which are lightened in proportion as he is permitted to draw only half-pay.

About this time, whilst the dawn was wrestling with the

gas-light and the promise of a new day lay behind its certain victory, there befel an incident which marked the lowest depth to which the House might sink. All night long Courtney had sat in his corner seat below the gangway, watching and waiting for some glimmering of reason to flicker over the House, under the light of which he might read out his thoughts to it. He had many amendments on the paper, and a little professorial essay for each. Several times he rose and tried to bring the angry House back to the paths of reason. But it would not be led, and at length, himself wearied out with the endeavour, he rose, and with a look of infinite pity, and speaking more in sorrow than in anger, he told the House that as it evidently was in no mood for reasoning, he (Courtney) must leave it. And he did, walking towards the door amidst the jeers and laughter of the unthinking herd.

Since Coriolanus turned his back upon the riotous citizens of Rome, and "banished" the Senate, no such scene has been enacted in the Western Hemisphere. "Despising," said Coriolanus,

———"despising
For you the city, thus I turn my back;
There is a world elsewhere."

And thus with equal dignity, and with the same noble scornful sorrow, the member for Liskeard "banished" the House of Commons.

"And Reason shrieked when Leonard Courtney fled."

At four o'clock in the morning Biggar was gently led out and put to bed in the library, disposing his person with some difficulty on three chairs.

"My hon. friend the member for Cavan," Parnell said, an hour later, "is peacefully slumbering, and will presently return like a giant refreshed."

This, however, was simply a figure of speech. The fact is, Biggar's slumbers were disturbed by a certain mysterious agility displayed by the chairs, which, in all parts of the room, were continually and unaccountably toppling over with crashing noises. On the whole the episode most resembled a familiar scene in the tragedy of "Richard III." As Biggar lay prone on the hastily-made couch, it required no stretch of imagination to

behold rising up behind him the ghosts of the various Bills he had slain in the course of the Session, each addressing to him words of eloquent reproach. However it be, it is certain that Biggar did not this morning sleep any better than did Richard III. on the eve of Bosworth Field.

But the gallantry that sustained his comrades was not lacking in the member for Cavan. Shortly after seven o'clock in the morning he entered the House, with what was intended to be a genial smile extended over the lower part of his expressive countenance, and a general air of jauntiness which ill befitted his languid step.

"Mr. Smith—Sir," he said, "I have had a good sleep and a rare good breakfast, and am naterally able and ready to go on with legislation;" a pleasant little fiction, carefully designed to make the Committee feel uncomfortable.

W. H. Smith was in the chair now, having stepped into it over the prostrate body of Childers, who had succeeded Raikes. The House was in other respects beginning to change its appearance. The white necktie era was passed, and shining morning faces replaced the pallid visages of the Members who had kept the night watch. Forster, true to his pledge, had gallantly kept his post all through the night, always having as *vis-à-vis* the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Reinforcements arriving with the morning milk, he felt at liberty to go off to that bath and breakfast which have been the only rest and nourishment nine out of ten of the British Legislators have enjoyed to-day. Of those who had taken their places at four o'clock on the previous afternoon, only half-a-dozen remained, disdainful of rest, and determined to see it out.

Of these the most prominent were the Admiral, and O'Donnell. The Admiral sat in his familiar place behind the Treasury Bench, with a slight heaviness discernible about his eyelids, and the shattered remains of many copies of the Orders at his feet. Otherwise he presented no evidence of his long watch. He was as ready to cheer at noon on Wednesday as he had been at six on Tuesday evening.

As for O'Donnell, his endurance was worthy of a better cause. At two o'clock this afternoon, when the Bill was on the verge of being passed, he was, to all appearances, as fresh as when he had begun at five o'clock on Tuesday afternoon. In

twenty-one hours of constant watchfulness, and almost incessant speech, he had not turned a hair. Early in the previous evening he had settled, though at some expense of facial expression, a prevailing difficulty which he formerly had with his eye-glass. Beginning his legislative career with double eye-glasses, he was led, possibly by observing Chamberlain's success, to adopt a single orb. This change of front in the face of the enemy naturally threw him back, and is probably equal, in the course of the Session, to the loss of seventeen notices of amendment. But he had mastered the difficulty last night; and, all through the long and heavily-weighted hours, the eye-glass did not once tumble out and compel him, instead of moving an amendment, to search for it in the recesses of his waistcoat.

Even when, at ten minutes past two this afternoon, a prolonged shout announced the costly triumph of the majority in the matter of the South Africa Bill, O'Donnell was not worn out. Just as his countryman, O'Leary, having walked an impossible number of miles in an inconvenient number of hours, took a little run to show that he was not in the slightest degree fatigued, so O'Donnell, having sat and talked through a twenty-one hours' discussion on the South Africa Bill, placidly entered upon a long speech in opposition to the East India Loan Bill. Having saved and accomplished this trot for the avenue, O'Donnell went off to his well-earned rest, whilst Parnell and Biggar took a fresh start in opposition to the Judicature Bill.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PROROGATION.

Whale in Turtle Soup—"Sing! Sing!"—Mr. Gladstone's Post-cards—Sir Charles Dilke—Sir J. Elphinstone breaks out—Fighting for the Crown—Mr. Gladstone's Decline—Prorogation.

Aug. 6.—Whale in turtle soup. There is a wicked story told in the House about a member, who is not altogether unconnected with the whaling trade,* but who, when he comes south, so far yields to the influences of civilisation that he may frequently

* Mr. Yeaman, member for Dundee.

be met dining out. The other night he was observed religiously to separate the green fat of the turtle from the liquid of the soup. His neighbour said to him,

"Don't you eat the fat?"

"Nae, nae," he replied, "it's nae that. It's the blubber that's nae boiled enough."

Aug. 7.—"Sing! Whalley was greeted to-night with the almost forgotten cry of "Sing, Sing!" He was dilating upon a familiar subject and was about to offer to the House a quotation, when some member, bethinking himself of the old story of Whalley's hymn, raised a shout that recalled a scene that happened at least fifteen years ago.

The cry of "Sing!" arose in this way. Whalley at the remote period mentioned was addressing the House upon the subject of the Church of Rome. He wished to gain its opinion upon a certain hymn accustomed to be sung in a Catholic Sunday-school, and, drawing a little book from his pocket, observed that he would read it to the House. A member struck with a happy thought called out "Sing it," and forthwith arose a unanimous shout of "Sing, Sing!"

For some time after it was the custom to greet Whalley in this fashion, until at last the practice was stopped by the then Speaker, who ruled it to be out of order.

Aug. 8. — Mr. Gladstone's post-cards. Gladstone is not to be laughed out of his proclivities for post-cards. I was talking to an aged official at the Fishmongers' Hall the other night, when Hartington dined there and was presented with the freedom of the Company.

"They invited Mr. Gladstone to come, sir," said he, "and what d'ye think? *He wrote on a post-card* to say he couldn't come. I took it in myself."

Aug. 9.—Sir Chas. Dilke. Members who, at the outset of their Parliamentary career, find themselves failures, will discover much cheering matter for reflection in the career of Charles Dilke. When, nine years ago, he entered Parliament, he claimed the suffrages of Chelsea on the ground that he was a Radical, and he had not long taken the oath of fealty to

his Sovereign before he seized an opportunity of showing to what lengths Radicalism might lead him. In conjunction with that other hot-headed youth, Auberon Herbert, he essayed to lay rough hands on the sacred ark of the Civil List, raising such a storm in the House of Commons as, in those far-off peaceful days, was regarded as a phenomenon worthy of engrossing public attention for a whole week. At the present epoch we think nothing of having strangers spied, and galleries cleared, and Pandemonium temporarily let loose on the floor of the House of Commons. Seven years ago these were less frequent occurrences, and the night when Dilke and Auberon Herbert entrenched themselves in the corner seat below the gangway (where Beresford Hope and Bentinck now sit), and defied the House of Commons, lives in vivid colours in the memory of members of Gladstone's Parliament of '68.

Dilke is seven years older since that night, and has travelled with seven-leagued boots away from the position he then assumed. He still calls himself "a Radical," and would, beyond doubt, vote straight on most points of the Radical charter; but he is, withal, the most courtly-mannered Radical that ever shocked a duke, or fluttered an earl. In fact, it would be difficult to find in his speeches of recent sessions any trace of Radicalism, as Radicalism is popularly imagined. It is true he would have the county franchise lowered, which is, I suppose, a Radical aspiration. But in advancing his views on the subject he quietly manages to make it appear that he would have the thing done because it is fair and right, and because it will in the end tend to the welfare of the State and the improvement of the people. The difference between the Dilke of 1870 and him of 1877 is, that where the one would have declaimed and demanded, the other argues and convinces.

Whilst Sir Charles has thus gained in force of character he has also improved in a direction where improvement does not always follow. At the time when he so shocked Cavendish Bentinck and "Jimmy" Lowther that they were obliged to retire behind the Speaker's chair and give vent to their outraged feelings in imitation of the vocalisation of the cock, and the inarticulate but expressive speech of the pig, Dilke was about as bad a speaker as one would find among an average score of members. He had a rapid, monotonous in-

tonation, which was made occasionally unbearable by an evil habit of turning his body half round from side to side, as if it were fixed on a pivot, and speech were evolved by its regular oscillation.

It would not be too much to say that he is at the present time one of the most effective speakers in the House. If he were to speak as badly now as he did seven years ago he would be listened to, because the House of Commons has learned to hold his opinions in high respect, as being those of a man of culture, experience, independent thought, and above all of sincerity, that great attribute, which in the House of Commons holds the relative position to other personal recommendations which charity has assigned to it in the Apostolic catalogue of virtues.

Beyond this, Dilke is a speaker whose attractions the House is always ready to acknowledge in the subtly flattering manner indicated by rapidly filling benches and fixed attention. In his prepared addresses, notably those in which he has arraigned the old-world corporations, his literary faculty is shown by his skilful grouping of facts, and his effective marshalling of arguments. He has a quiet, but by no means inanimate, delivery, emphasising his points by a few simple and appropriate gestures, amid which only the faintest ghost of the once-prevailing pivot motion still lingers. He evidently prepares his speeches with great care. The other night he showed that he has the power of ready-speaking which is, as far as Parliamentary success is concerned, of infinitely greater value than the kind of triumph which Macaulay achieved. Joseph Cowen had made one of those powerful addresses by which he sometimes ruffles the level flow of Parliamentary oratory. His views chanced to be diametrically opposed to those of his fellow-Radical, and Sir Charles, immediately following him, made some effective points. His speech was, as usual, brief; but I never heard him speak better.

Whether all this comes of careful study, or whether it is the result of unconscious adaptation to the influences of the place, Sir Charles may, if asked, probably confide to any aspirant to Parliamentary success who would follow in his footsteps. However it be, the fact remains, and it is gratifying to both sides; for there is no more popular man in the House of Commons than he who seven years ago was hooted and howled at, and

was for many succeeding months the mark of contumely and scorn on the part of all well-conducted journals.

Aug. 9.—Sir J. Elphinstone breaks out. It is a peculiarity of the Irish Member that he not only uses strong language himself, but is the cause of the use of strong language by others. Here is Sir James Elphinstone, for example, who for four Sessions has led a most exemplary life. Through many long days and nights he has sat on the corner seat of the Treasury Bench, listening in most admired dumbness to provoking debates. Time was when he was amongst the frequent speech-makers in the House. Forty-three years ago he was sailing the briny ocean in command of the good ship *Orwell*, carrying the East India Company's flag. When the Company reduced their establishment they began with Sir James, who being washed ashore high and dry upon the crest of this wave of economy has remained there ever since, young members of the House having gradually gained the impression that a century or so ago, he was, at least, a Rear-Admiral of the British Fleet, and probably played a glorious part in the Battle of Trafalgar.

Whenever the Navy Estimates came on, be sure there was Elphinstone in the midst of them, floundering furiously and firing heavy guns, not always accurately aimed, at persons in authority. Dockyard reform was his specially strong point, and Childers and Goschen retain a lively recollection of the figure of this Ancient Mariner rising from the seat now worthily filled by Rylands, and obstructing the passage of votes, whilst he re-delivered a familiar speech.

Sir James had a compeer and a frequent competitor for the Speaker's eye in Bentinck, who undertook the care of ships afloat, whilst the Baronet looked after the dockyards. Between the two the Government of the day had life made weary and existence embittered. The only satisfaction to be derived by a Minister from a contemplation of this worthy pair of old salts was that they were perfectly impartial in their criticism. What a Liberal Government groaned under, a Conservative Government would suffer from the day they were made competent by accepting office.

It was a knowledge of this fact which led Disraeli, when

forming his Administration, to spend some anxious moments in consideration of what he should do about Elphinstone and that other Mariner known indifferently as "the Cap'n" and "Big Ben." To have them seated below the gangway meant interminable and sometimes inconvenient discussions on naval affairs; to take them both on board the ship of State would inevitably be to sink it. It was desirable to choose the lesser evil, and so Disraeli, shrinking from the prospect of sitting on the same bench with "Cap'n," offered Elphinstone office as a Lord of the Treasury with a salary of £1,000 a year.

"There is only one thing I'd like to say, Elphinstone," remarked the Premier, laying his hand familiarly on his shoulder. "A Lord of the Treasury has nothing to do with dockyards, you know."

Sir James remained silent a moment, pondering over all this meant. There flashed through his mind memories of happy nights when he was wont to beard the First Lord of the Admiralty touching yellow metal for ships' bottoms, and hold the House of Commons silent under the spell of his eloquence whilst he denounced the false economy that imperilled the British Navy by substituting inch rope for inch and a quarter. No more should he scan the Navy estimates with eager glance in search of evidence that the Dockyard staff had been reduced or increased—it did not matter which.

"Couldn't I," he said, in a tremulous voice, whilst a tear stood in his honest eyes—"Couldn't I, when the Navy Estimates come on, show how much better the dockyard is managed under Ward Hunt than it was under Goschen?"

Disraeli did not directly answer, but turning over some papers before him, he said, as if speaking to himself, "I think I must answer that letter of Bentinck's."

"Ah! well!" said Sir James hastily, "I think you are right. Perhaps it is as well to let the Dockyard question sleep a bit. I shall be glad to serve my country as a Lord of the Treasury."

"Mum?"

"Mum!" and Sir James walked slowly and sadly away, went home, burned all his old copies of the Navy Estimates, and made spills of the notes of what he had forgotten to say last Session, and which he had hoped to use in the forthcoming year.

He has kept his word to the letter. The torture has told terribly upon him—aged him in the sight of all men. But he has borne up bravely and calmly, forcing himself to sit silent whilst other men, and more particularly the “Cap’n,” have discoursed at length, and with the regularity of the Trade wind, on the cherished topic.

Only on Tuesday the “Cap’n” was on the old subject, and, leaning on his stick, with paper held in his left hand, frowned all round the House, reiterating the inquiry, “Where are your iron-clads?” Moving round from side to side, he felt convinced that though an effete and badly-managed Admiralty might fail to have brought an iron-clad down to the House, some member, more alive to the true interests of the country, would presently produce one from his waistcoat-pocket.

The “Cap’n” enjoyed himself more than usual that night, revelling in the knowledge that his old ally and successful competitor for the mess of pottage has put his foot in it. After these four sessions of steady silence, Sir James, alas! has broken out. We hear sometimes of a man addicted to drinking who has taken the pledge and strictly keeps it several years, becoming a comfort to his family and an ornament to society. Then, one day or night, being in familiar haunts, and meeting well-remembered cronies, he yields to temptation, and the unaccustomed alcohol acts upon him with a maddening force that makes his last end considerably worse than his first.

So it has been with Elphinstone. Through four sessions he has been absolutely dumb. Last week he received permission to forestall the recess, and hasten northward to loved Logie Elphinstone. The sweet, strong air of Scotland, the sense of freedom after long restraint, the contact with congenial spirits at the Farmers’ Club—these were too much for the stoutest spirit, the sternest will. Sir James was induced to make a speech. He began gently and cautiously, as befits a responsible Minister of the Crown. But as the responsive cheers rang in his ears, the blood began to dance through his veins with dangerous vigour. His bent form straightened, his eye brightened, his cheek glowed, the memory of far-off Westminster and the Premier’s warning forefinger momentarily grew more indistinct; and finally, like a war-horse who, scenting the battle from afar, has galloped up to the skirts of

the field and presently dashes in, so Sir James, freed from official restraint, opened his mind and loosed his tongue on the subject of the Irish members.

Nearly two years ago Sir John Astley, speaking under similar circumstances, had referred to the Home Rulers as "forty of the most confounded rascals he ever saw." Sir James, further winnowing out the matter, denounced the obstructive portion as "five or six ruffians." Whereat a great shout went up towards the blue sky of Gairloch, and awakened Sir James to the terrible consciousness that he had made a nice mess of it.

And thus, on Tuesday night, whilst the "Cap'n" was growling in happy independence, critically scanning the House in search of those ironclads which he is convinced are concealed about the persons of members, A. M. Sullivan was giving notice of his intention to have Sir James brought up before the Speaker, and that mildest of men, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was frowning terribly at this new and unsuspected catastrophe.

"It is," he said to a member as he walked out after question time, "a remarkably characteristic thing that, after all, the only man who is likely to be censured in connection with the conduct of the Irish obstructives is a member of Her Majesty's Government, and he is one who has not, throughout it all, once opened his mouth from his place in the House."

But matters have cleared off by to-night. Sir James, alarmed at the prospect of having to travel all the way down to London to answer the charge, forestalled judgment by writing a letter of frankest apology, which Irish members, not liking to miss a scene, and yet determined to leave town to-night, cheerfully accept; and Biggar smiles as he walks out with disproportionately long strides, feeling that he leaves the House without a stain upon his character.

Aug. 13.—Fighting for the Crown.

In one important respect Her Majesty's Opposition distinctly differs at the present juncture as compared with its attitude at any former stage of its personal history. Even at the end of last Session, when gentlemen who had formed Gladstone's Administration had had time to shake themselves down in their new quarters, the distinguishing feature of the company of statesmen was the absence

of a Leader. Some of the many who at the outset had backed themselves for places had, indeed, begun to "tail off." It had been borne in upon Shaw-Lefevre, for example, that though a man of wide experience, infinite resource, and almost violent volubility, there were lacking in him certain qualities required in the Leader of an Opposition, and a proximate Premier. Lyon Playfair, who had, at the outset, shown a disposition to wrestle with Forster for the seat opposite the brass-bound box conterminous with the position of Leader of the Opposition, had retired, crushed in body if not subdued in spirit. A cloud had come over the light spirit of Harcourt, and Knatchbull-Hugessen had found the necessity for admitting that the time was not yet ripe for him to undertake the Leadership of the Liberal Party. But there still remained Forster, Childers, and Goschen, who, with more or less awkwardness, concealed the conviction that since Gladstone would not make up his mind, and as Hartington disdained to push his own claims, it might be their duty, severally and respectively, to assume the vacant post of Leader.

The present Session has seen an end definitively put to the distractions consequent on this state of affairs. Whatever may be its other failings, at the present time the Opposition possesses a Leader whose personal influence is acknowledged on both sides of the House. Few pages in modern political history may be read with greater pleasure than that which records Hartington's growth into the Leadership of the Opposition. The office was thrust upon him in a manner which, though not intentionally, was unmistakably offensive. The scarcely concealed impression of the electoral body was that Hartington was the best possible man, rather on account of negative qualities than of supreme qualifications. He was a man who would do no harm in the post, who created no personal jealousies, who was placed by fortune above the meaner incentives to personal aggrandisement, and who, moreover, cared so little about the distinction that if presently Gladstone signified his intention to return, or if some other and more desirable Leader were to develop himself, he might be counted upon to give up without a sigh of regret what he had accepted without a smile of pleasure.

It would be too long a task to trace in detail the thorny path he has trodden to reach the place he now occupies. He has

known how to wait and endure, with a patience that may be due to constitutional habit, but is none the less admirable. Without observing any slavish adherence to the hours during which the House has been in Session, he generally happened to be present when it was necessary for him to say a desirable word, and he has always managed to say the right thing at the right time. He has, moreover, marvellously improved in ability as a speaker. His contribution to the debate on the introduction of the new disciplinary rules, was, in point of style and effect, perhaps, the best he ever delivered in the House. As a Parliamentary speaker he is at least on a par with the Leader of the House, and has shown a capacity for improvement which, if it proceeds at equal pace during the next two sessions, will give him a decided advantage over Stafford Northcote.

One obvious assistance in acquiring this all-important Parliamentary success is his ultimate conversion to the great fact that, in all but very exceptional cases, every minute beyond twenty occupied in the delivery of a speech undermines its strength and tends to nullify its effect. In former times Hartington was accustomed to drone through three-quarters of an hour of ineffective wordiness, his strong common sense and clear views struggling to show their form under the wet blanket of speech cast over them. Now he never takes more than twenty minutes for his speeches, and often says all he has to say within the limits of ten minutes or a quarter of an hour.

Mr. Gladstone's decline. As the influence of Hartington has increased, the influence of Gladstone, in the House of Commons at least, has declined. There is a strong personal animosity towards Gladstone existent in the House, and by no means confined to the Conservative benches. Indeed, his bitterest enemies are to be found amongst those who in former times were of his own household. To this end he has contributed in lavish measure, and with sedulous regularity, by an amount of restlessness, uncertainty, self-contradiction, and general recklessness of political conduct positively appalling. The last thing that a man could count upon with any degree of certainty was what line Gladstone might take on a given question. During the Parliamentary session now closing he has been like a comet that has got loose from the control of the solar system, and has dashed about the

political firmament in a manner that may have proved exhilarating to himself, but has been decidedly embarrassing to others. His present position may be best defined by the fact that whilst three years ago his retirement from the leadership of the Liberal Party appeared to be a calamity never to be recovered from, a proposition for his return at the present time would, if submitted for the approval of members who sit on the Opposition benches, be voted down by a majority of three to one.

Whilst the once great Leader has thus succeeded in bringing about a fatal declension of his Parliamentary position, other gentlemen who held prominent office under him have begun to retrieve a personal position affected three years ago by the general discredit of their party. Goschen is developing unexpected powers as a smart debater, and as he is less tainted than some of his fellows with the disease prevalent on the front Opposition bench of thrusting himself forward in debate, he is always listened to with a respect and attention not to be disturbed by his odd grimaces and his apparent total inability to give utterance to his thoughts on high political questions unless he be comforted by physical contact of the edge of the bench with the back of his legs.

Childers is still weighed down with the heaviness of his own wordiness, and does all he can to hide his considerable, though not first-class, qualities as a statesman behind the delivery of long speeches unrelieved by the play of fancy, the fire of wit, or even the use of ordinary emphasis. Lowe sits for the most part silent, and always watchful, low down on the bench, in an obscurity made illustrious by the companionship of Bright and Gladstone. He does not often speak, but when he seizes the opportunity he shows that he has lost nothing of his skill in attack. Forster feels the growing influence of Hartington, and has during the current session moved at least ten inches away from the seat of the leader of the Opposition, which in the earlier days of tenancy of the front Opposition bench he determinedly appropriated. Harcourt has distinctly retired into the background during the past Session, even abandoning the pretence of regular attendance on the debates, though as he often looks in after dinner, and is not prevented from taking part in a debate by the consciousness that he knows nothing of

the course it has followed throughout the night, his name figures in undue proportion in the Parliamentary debates.

Of the rest there is not much to say. Baxter is quiet and modest, and bides his time. Knatchbull-Hugessen is fussy, verbose, and patronising, ready on the shortest notice to give the benefit of his advice to Her Majesty's Government, or to any private member who may not have asked for it. In these respects he finds a rival in Shaw-Lefevre, one of "Gladstone's young men," in viewing whom, as he glibly discourses on all matters under the sun, one is tempted to doubt whether the great services Gladstone has rendered to his country really compensate for the evil accomplished by his infliction of Shaw-Lefevre in a ministerial capacity upon the House of Commons.

Aug. 14.—Prorogation. It is a happy conclusion of a complicated matter, that, after a Session in which there has been displayed an occasional lack of dignity, and in which there have occurred scenes that scarcely maintain the majesty of Parliament, the business should be brought to a conclusion by the imposing ceremony of Prorogation by Commission. To the eye troubled with reading the records of turbulence in the Commons, and to the heart weary with watching for the return of the old dignity of Parliament, there is something soothing and refreshing in the sight of the five Commissioners seated on the bench before the Throne. There is a sense of security about the scarlet gowns slashed with ermine, and a measure of comfort about the cocked hats, which atone for much former uncertainty and earlier wrestling with Obstruction.

My Lord Skelmersdale, having an abundant beard of slightly reddish tint, doth not, perhaps, altogether become the scarlet gown. But my Lord the Marquis of Salisbury, with his strong black beard disposed over the scarlet tippet, and his dark eyes flashing beneath the cornice of his cocked hat, looks better and more imposing than any beadle I ever saw in similar costume. One is accustomed to see the Lord Chancellor in wig and gown, and a change of colour or of shape of head-gear is neither here nor there. Also the Duke of Richmond is one of those amiable-looking gentlemen of not very strongly-marked personality, who are invaluable in private

theatricals, and serve equally well in the parts of the indignant father, the gratified bridegroom, or the stolid serving-man. His Grace bears his honours meekly, as does Lord Harrowby, though there is rather a tendency, on the part of his Lordship, to slink a little behind the Duke, and so get out of the line of sight of the bevy of ladies who cluster on the Opposition Benches, and mercilessly quiz the unwomanly wearers of skirt and tippet.

For the rest, the chamber is almost empty. Redesdale, faithful to the last, has come down on crutches to be present at the ceremony of the Prorogation, and reposes almost at full length on the otherwise empty Ministerial Bench. Two bishops, arrayed in lawn, give an atmosphere of coolness to the benches to the right of the Throne; whilst four Peers are thrown out in skirmishing order on the benches behind. Black Rod has been despatched to summon Her Majesty's faithful Commons, and in the meanwhile the Lord Chancellor, putting up his eye-glass, which he does in a manner carefully modelled after the Premier, surveys the scene, and Salisbury violently essays to regard the whole matter as a joke, though Skelmersdale, who is seated immediately on his left, in full view of the critical assembly of ladies, is not able to see matters in that light.

Black Rod, arrived at the Commons, found Bourke on his feet, happily answering the last question that shall be put to him this Session, either by philo-Russians desirous of eliciting some information damaging to the Turks, or by philo-Turks studiously bent upon showing that the Russians are no better than they should be. It has been a hard Session for Bourke, and also for his pocket-handkerchief, which latter, in his endeavour to frame an answer that shall convey as little information as possible, suffers a good deal, being finally left hanging more than three parts out of his breast pocket, to the great concern of John Manners, who, in the aggregate, spends a good many hours of the Session watching through his eye-glass this acrobatic handkerchief, fearful lest it should fall, and marvelling at the manner in which it appears to hold on.

There is a pretty large assemblage of hon. members, some of whom, like McArthur—"the Father of Fiji," as Whalley called him the other night—are charged with messages of comfort for distant colonies. The Admiral is there, of course, cheery and cheering to the last. He has been away for a few minutes, and

now returns with news that Black Rod is coming, and stands for a moment fully prepared to resume his seat, but waiting with characteristic politeness till the member who bars his way to it shall become aware of his presence. The member is deep in thought, and does not see the Admiral. The Admiral goes off at half-cock with one of his familiar coughs. The member drops his legs as if he were shot, and the way is cleared for the Admiral to resume his seat.

There is a full muster of Ministers, but Her Majesty's Opposition are already scattered far and wide, by hill and moor and sea. Kensington takes the opportunity of sitting down for the first time this Session, it is said, and finds himself in company with Knatchbull-Hugessen, whose leadership is unquestioned, even by Lyon Playfair. One figure is absent that might well be expected to show itself under the circumstances. Where is Harcourt? It is his fancy to play the part of the Parliamentary Casabianca, and to be seen treading the deck whence all but he have fled. He is like the "Minstrel Boy" who comforted the land of song with the assurance,

"Though all the world betrays thee,
One sword at least thy right shall guard,
One faithful harp shall praise thee!"

Or, perhaps, more correctly, he is the Mrs. Micawber of the House of Commons, for it will be remembered that when that estimable lady was in the habit of declaring to her husband that she would "never desert him," Mr. Micawber answered with a look of mild surprise:—"My dear, I was not aware that anyone had proposed permanent separation." In similar manner the House of Commons is politely surprised when Sir William persists in these manifestations of untimely fidelity.

Only on Saturday, he played with great effect the part of Mrs. Micawber. The House met on that day to transact the formal business which it was prepared to accomplish, and straightway separate. But Sir William turned up, and insisted upon throwing his arms round the neck of the House (of course in a Parliamentary sense) and sobbing on its shoulder: "I will never desert you." Other members might have gone home consoling themselves with the notion that the year's debates were over. Not so the faithful member for Oxford. The time ap-

peared to him most opportune for raising a debate on international law, just by way of showing to the House how tireless was his care for its interest, and how implacable his determination never to desert it.

Here was another, and even a better, chance for Casabianca. A speech on British policy in India ; on the limits of belligerent right in the matter of blockade ; or on the application of international law, in respect to the boundary line of Greenland, would, any one or each in succession, have been very effective. Perhaps Sir William took cognisance of the fact that the entrance of Black Rod might interrupt and put a final end to a speech even from him. However it be, he was not here to-day. Saturday had seen Casabianca taking his last turn on the burning deck. Since Saturday the one sword of the Minstrel Boy had been sheathed, the one faithful harp had grown silent. To-day Mrs. Micawber played the part of a deserter.

Sir William Knollys having, amidst breathless excitement, safely encompassed his backward journey towards the door, the Speaker rose, and passed with stately presence through the up-standing ranks of the Commons. The procession moved on in due order, till it reached the broad gateway to the Lords, when, like a regiment at the charge, its ranks broke, and a desperate rush was made for front places. On the crest of the wave which parted and made for the left gallery, Bourke was carried, coming in first, with Henry Havelock second, O'Brien third, the rest not placed. It is said that during the rush there was an anxious moment, when it was feared that Fiji was about to lose a Father. The Alderman got jammed up against a post, and there stuck, uttering exclamations which it is only charitable to suppose were scraps of the Fijian tongue. He was presently extricated before the pressure had reached his bones, and on the whole rather profited by the accident, getting nearer to the front than he otherwise might have done.

The Five Figures who sat on the wooden bench before the Throne, observing the presence of the Speaker, three times lifted their cocked hats. Then the clerk of Parliament, rising from the end of the table, advanced till he stood at the side, and producing a large document, began to read the Royal Commission appointing our trusted and well-beloved counsellors to the distinguished position they quite successfully

concealed under the red cloaks. It was, as Mr. Pepys says, "pretty to see" how, when the clerk, reading down the document, came to the name of one of the Commissioners, he turned and bowed lowly towards the Five Figures on the form, whereat one produced a hand from under the folds of the cloak, and, raising it to the cocked hat, uplifted with stately sweep that peaked incongruity.

The pink of politeness was reached later on, when the form of giving the Royal Assent was gone through. At this juncture another clerk in wig and gown stepped out at the other side of the table, when the procedure was literally as follows: The clerk on the right hand of the table takes up a Bill, and turning round so as to face the Figures bows low, the clerk on the other side performing at the same time precisely the same gesture, as if the two were connected by an axle and turned by a single cogwheel. The clerk on the right, who is known as the Clerk of Parliament, reads the title of the Bill, and then faces to the left. The Clerk of the Crown on the other side faces to the right, and the two being thus brought face to face, the Clerk of the Crown chants,

"La reyne le veult!"

Then some one in charge, possibly the resident engineer, giving another turn to the invisible wheel, the Clerk of Parliament and the Clerk of the Crown simultaneously turn towards the Five Figures, and bow down almost to their boots. The Clerk of Parliament takes up another Bill and reads the title, after which he turns and bows again, the Clerk of the Crown bowing at the same time. Then they turn and face each other as before, and once more there rings through the chamber the solemn lugubrious chant,

"La reyne le veult!"

Fancy this going on without intermission or variation for the space of a quarter of an hour, add to it an aspect of settled melancholy on the face of the Clerk of the Crown, and an ever deepening sadness in his monotonous chant "*La reyne le veult!*" and some excuse may be found for the ladies, who, to the number of sixteen, were before the ceremony was over, reduced to a state of exhaustion through uncontrollable laughter.

After this, *que voulez-vous?* The Act of Prorogation was read; the Lord Chancellor declared Parliament prorogued;

Colonel Talbot shouldered the mace; another functionary took up the elegantly-worked bag in which the Grand Seal is supposed to be conveyed; the Lord Chancellor walked out in procession by himself—and the Session of 1877 became a chapter in history.

“What a love of a bag for embroidery and things!” one of the ladies whispered, quite audibly, as, with longing eyes, she followed the departing figure of the gentleman who carried away the receptacle for the Grand Seal.

SESSION 1878.

CHAPTER XXIV.

READY FOR WAR.

The Opening Day—Mr. Egerton—Mr. Rylands—The Admiral—Surprise—Relapse—Revival—Resignation of Lord Carnarvon—Movements of the Fleet—In the Lords—Rumours of Lord Derby's Resignation—"In straits."

Jan. 16. — The Session opened to-day, three weeks before opening day. the ordinary time, a circumstance which in these exciting times deepened public apprehension. Tennant, who seconded the Address in the Commons, went far outside the beaten track in the matter of uniform, crossing the horizon of the House a brilliant meteor of bountiful gold lace, and illimitable tags and tassels. But the crowning marvel was a sort of supplementary jacket gracefully worn upon his left arm. What this might be no civilian could tell. Pease, who sat immediately opposite, was much exercised, and privately communicated his opinion that Tennant, not being accustomed to military uniform, had got in the wrong way, or had forgotten to put his right arm in the sleeve. Beresford Hope, standing by the entrance door from the lobby, stared aghast at what he at first thought was a waif and stray from an invading army of the ruthless Russ. No reference to information respecting Tennant's business pursuits could assist the inquiring mind. When he is not moving the Address, he is a flax spinner. But, plainly, this could not be the office dress of a gentleman who owns a flax mill. Wilfrid Lawson says it is the "unexpected occurrence" referred to in the Queen's Speech, the precise character of which has excited so much curiosity. However it be, it was an impressive spectacle, calculated with happy opportuneness, to show to whomsoever it may concern, that the martial spirit is not dead in Englishmen, and that in the hour of danger, a hundred thousand uniforms more or less like that

which blazed on the bosom of Tennant, would be immediately ordered.

Mr. Egerton. Wilbraham Egerton, who, clad in the more familiar uniform of the Yeomanry Cavalry, formed the right wing of the compact force mustered under the flag of the Address, had evidently bestowed a good deal of pains upon his speech. For nearly twenty years he has sat in Parliament, and has hitherto failed to disturb the pre-eminence of men like Pitt and Fox, or even Disraeli and Gladstone. Here was a chance at last for the honour of the Egertons, and the glory of the Cheshire Yeomanry Cavalry. It behoved him to make the best of it. Barring a tendency in the early part of his speech for his well-considered sentences to "telescope" each other—that is to say to come into collision, and the front part of one train of thought to get mixed in the middle of another—the gallant Captain did pretty well.

But salt was his ruin. Cheshire, it appears, makes, not only cheese, but has considerable transactions in salt; and it had occurred to the mind of the member for the middle division of the county that the occasion of moving the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne was a favourable opportunity of offering a few observations on Cheshire salt. The core of the Eastern Question, it appears, at least as far as India is concerned, is to be found in the salt-mines of Cheshire. How the proposition is worked out Egerton did not make precisely clear. But, somehow or other, it seems that, if ships go out to India with Cheshire salt, they can bring back wheat at ridiculously low freights. From this circumstance will, in some manner, arise a complete settlement of most questions on Indian policy. Russia will be outflanked, Great Britain will be prosperous, and Cheshire will be cheery. This, perhaps, does not look very clear when written down on paper; but it was straightforward enough in the mind of Egerton.

All this while Tennant, with his right arm thrown negligently over the back of the seat, and the supplementary jacket worn on his left arm displayed so that the Speaker might with greater accuracy observe the seams in the back, sat in gloomy silence waiting the hour when his turn should come. Egerton had plainly got into a pickle on the salt question, and who

should say what might be *his* fate? When the moment came he met it gallantly, dashing into the middle of his speech with a soldierly nonchalance which well became his martial attire. He certainly had the better of his companion in distress. But on the whole the performance was not calculated to raise the spirits, nor may it be regarded as starting the Session of 1878 at a canter.

Mr. Rylands. It is a pity that circumstances make it impossible for Rylands, for example, to move and, indeed, to second the Address. He is always in high spirits. But his manifestations of gaiety on such an occasion as the reassembling of Parliament after the recess are perfectly overwhelming. His satisfaction at finding himself once more in the House of Commons on the eve of a Session that promises to be unusually prolonged, and opens up a long vista of nights when he may make innumerable speeches, was quite touching. There were very few members present between one and four this afternoon whose backs were not punched, whose ribs were not tickled, or who did not hear Rylands' voice shouting in their ears. It is said by statisticians that the shoulders and ribs of Hartington are the only materials of the kind in the House of Commons which, at some time or other during his Parliamentary career, Rylands has not slapped or punched. Locke just escaped the infliction by effecting a brilliant flank movement on the Post Office, where he remained, apparently purchasing stamps but all the while keeping a watchful eye on the boisterous economist, and waiting an opportunity to get quietly away.

The Admiral. His meeting with the Admiral this afternoon was quite dramatic. The Admiral, who has grown thin and looks a little worn in consequence of having for five months been deprived of the opportunity of sitting to all hours of the night in the House of Commons, entered about one o'clock and steered for his accustomed moorings behind the Treasury Bench. But Rylands, who had just effusively welcomed Newdegate, saw him, and as a playful Newfoundland dog will run towards a new-comer, and will leap upon him, fawning and making believe he would bite, so Rylands descended on the Admiral, and had slapped both his shoulders, and felt five of his ribs before the gallant gentleman could cry "hear! hear!"

The Admiral made the greeting as short as possible, for his mind was intent on gaining his old seat, and this he happily did before any one else had appropriated it. He placed his hat on the bench as a ship drops anchor, and, being thus safely moored and riding free, he felt at liberty to pay a few visits to his many friends. But he was back in his place before the Speaker took the chair, and throughout the early part of the sitting created considerable diversion on the Treasury Bench by insisting on shaking hands with every Minister as he arrived.

These little things cast some liveliness on the earlier stages of the meeting. But the tone of the mover and seconder of the Address was more in unison with the spirit of the evening. There was, at the outset, an unusual feeling prevalent which, to every one but Rylands, forbade indulgence in high spirits. Members evidently felt the seriousness of the occasion, and were anxious chiefly for the arrival of the moment when the best or the worst should be known. There was not the eager anticipation which in former times preluded a political crisis in which the speaker on the one side used to be Disraeli, and on the other Gladstone. The business of the evening rested with Stafford Northcote and Hartington, and men thought a great deal more of what they would say than of how they would say it. Gladstone was early in his place, looking as fagged as if it were the end of the Session instead of the beginning, but still eager and instinct with life, and occupied with correspondence. Bright was there too in his usual place at the obscurer end of the bench, making room at the upper end for Harcourt, who sat with folded arms and a pleased expression of conscious power.

Hartington was in bad voice, but otherwise in good form, and the fragments of his speech which were audible were full of point. Whilst he spoke, Gladstone was busy taking notes; and a chance expression thrown out, just above the salt, by Egerton supplied him with a text for a speech which, under other and less happy circumstances, would have provoked a tremendous dissertation on the British position during the Franco-German war—its points of difference and its lines of resemblance with the present crisis. But Stafford Northcote spoiled that speech, as he murdered in its infancy many another.

Surprise. The House of Commons has of late been accustomed to surprises; but never has it been treated to one so complete as this.

At twenty minutes past seven the House was overshadowed by apprehensions of grave emergency which had almost passed the region of doubt. Everybody knew or thought he knew that supplies were to be asked for. The army was to be placed on a war footing, and the navy was to be increased; the only doubt current related to the precise sum the Government were about to ask for. Hartington, sharing the prevalent opinion, had framed his speech upon this basis, and, after the resonant cheers with which the rising of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was greeted from his own side had subsided, a solemn hush fell upon the House, and all waited to hear what might be words of doom. It was charming, under these circumstances, to see and hear Stafford Northcote. With Beaconsfield it would have been called acting, and he would have been praised for his skill. But Stafford Northcote has the great advantage of having inspired men with a conviction of his sincerity, and, therefore, all the more complete and unqualified was the success with which he demolished the War Spectre. As he spoke, demonstrating rather than protesting the perfect innocence of the Government of complicity in any of those heroic plans attributed to them by what he called "indiscreet friends," it was pretty to see how faces in the crowd on the left of the Speaker brightened, and how a cloud of doubt and distrust seemed to fall over the Ministerial benches. No supplies, no levying of forces—nothing at all!

The Admiral, who had lustily cheered his chief when he rose, gradually subsided into a silence almost terrible to observe. He shifted from side to side; tried to comfort the left knee on the rail before him after having suffered disappointment with the right, and took a careful observation of the precise position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to make sure that the words and sentences he heard were really coming from a Conservative bench, and above all, from the Treasury Bench. Finally, with an audible sigh, he took up a copy of the Orders, and began furiously to fan himself.

Never since Stirlingshire made itself immortal by returning the Admiral to Parliament has such a scene as this been

witnessed. That, when Biggar is addressing the House, or when some deluded person opposite is suggesting the possibility of one of Her Majesty's Ministers committing an error of judgment, the Admiral should seize a piece of white paper, and, with peremptory and contemptuous gestures, whisk imaginary flies off his nose, seems a proper and natural conclusion. But that he should fan himself when the spokesman of the Conservative Ministry is making a statement at an important crisis of the Eastern Question is an indication of the precise position of affairs more eloquent than a page of description.

Jan. 23. — Re-lapse. The House of Commons has been uncommonly dull throughout the week, a condition the more acutely felt because we were specially invited to a more than usually brilliant entertainment. We came to dance, and remained to fall asleep through sheer inanition. We were to have had a fierce debate on the Eastern Question, and lo! Hypothec is already upon us; our pathway lies along the Roads and Bridges (Scotland) Bill; we rest a while in the Linen and Yarn Halls (Dublin) Bill; and the fiercest flash of passion that illumines the Houses rises from the second bench below the gangway on the Ministerial side, as Sir H. Drummond Wolff looks across the floor to see if Sir Charles Dilke is in his place, and would dare once more to bar the progress of the House Occupiers' Disqualifications Removal Bill. Even the Major feels the influence of the time, and the warrior who before the Waterford Board of Guardians dashed the gauntlet of defiance in the teeth of the Saxon, now, with tears in his eyes, craves "pardon of every Englishman." Many Members, either unable to endure the influence of the time and place, or perhaps feeling that they might be more usefully employed elsewhere, have gone away, and one familiar with the varying aspects of the House would, if he were to look in now and guess what period of the Session it was, surmise that Stansfeld was on his legs delivering his annual speech on the rights of his fellow-women, or that we were in the penultimate week, with all quarrels adjusted and the Appropriation Bills on the Orders.

I do not remember at any time since he left us feeling so acutely the absence of Disraeli. He introduced into the deliberations of the House of Commons the element of surprise

requisite to its perfection. Whilst he was in the House no one could say what might happen. Anything might happen, from the abandonment of a cherished Ministerial measure to the announcement of the discovery of dangerous designs on the part of the Republican party in Fiji. His very attitude as he sat on the Treasury bench, with head bent down and knees and hands crossed, was the final touch to the perfection of the programme. He seemed comatose, or at least asleep, and yet he was always wide awake, ready to spring on Gladstone or Bright, or on smaller fry like Harcourt. If, in those days, a dull season befell, there was at least the conviction that at any moment an earthquake might happen. But now the House of Commons goes by clockwork, and, being wound up at four in the afternoon, proceeds with depressing regularity till it runs down.

Everybody knows beforehand what Stafford Northcote will do or say, and Hartington is not given to oratorical tumbling or political *tours de force*. Gladstone has long ceased to interest the House; nor does Bright sway its passion as of old. Apart from these, the only men on either front bench capable of arousing the assembly from the depth of its dulness are Gathorne Hardy on the one side, and Harcourt on the other. It is true that new interest centres upon the Postmaster-General since he thrilled the nation with that picture of a sword surmounted by the lily of peace. But when Lord John Manners speaks, it is impossible to associate his gently-modulated voice and ladylike manner with the shout of men-of-war and the shock of battle. Gathorne Hardy, by the warmth of his own passion, and Harcourt, by his successful imitation of Disraeli's phraseology, can, under certain circumstances, raise a crowded House into a blaze of excitement. But there must be occasion and a crowded House, and neither seems possible just now. To Disraeli all things were possible in this direction. He delighted, when the current was running most sluggishly, to dash in and kick about the limbs of invective, taunt, and denunciation, till the smooth surface grew ruffled and the ripples became angry waves. But Disraeli has gone to another place; and, if it were not for the Irish members, we might as well count the slow minutes in a vestry-hall as in St. Stephen's.

Jan. 24.—Revival. It is less than twenty-four hours since the above was committed to paper. But a great gulf is stretched between the House of Commons to-day and the House of Commons of yesterday. The magician's wand has been at work, and the listless, dull, emotionally decrepit assembly of yesterday is transformed into an eager, intense, solemnly-earnest gathering. The little bird that flutters about the Reform Club, the Carlton, and other places of political resort, had whispered that strange things were at hand, and thus the House was, by comparison with the previous days, quite crowded when the Speaker took the chair. Ministers looked grave; the Opposition were anxious; and Macdonald began to think that if ever he was to be sent for by the Queen the time was near at hand.

In brief, news had come that the Russians were marching on Gallipoli, and might even now be thundering at the gates of Constantinople.

Stafford Northcote, rising hurriedly, and with an endeavour to assume an air suitable to the announcement of intention to bring in some little Bill referring to County Rates, or the incidence of the Dog-tax, gave a momentous notice that appeared to presage war. Her Majesty's Government, he said, felt themselves obliged to come to the House for exceptional supplies. There was a cheer from the Ministerial benches, whilst there followed on the Opposition side that peculiar demonstration of feeling which French reporters simply, but effectually, describe by the word *mouvement*. It was too early by five minutes for Hartington to be in his place, and the first interpellation came from Hanbury. Hanbury is a gentleman with whom it seems impossible to associate ideas of rapine and war. He is on the Conservative side what Kay-Shuttleworth is on the Liberal. In truth there are between the two members strong points of resemblance. Both are tall, and neither affects that superiority over the gentler sex which is indicated by the redundant whisker, or the manly moustache. Both have gentle manners, and both regard life as much too serious a thing to be trifled with, even in its lowest developments, or its most commonplace phase. Both are of active philanthropic tendencies, and in either the black man, of whatever persuasion, would find a man and a brother. Both are essentially good

young men as opposed to the condition of strong young men ; and both have the satisfaction of knowing that, though the House of Commons will not give up its dinner in order to hear them speak, whether the subject be the ventilation of wash-houses or the condition of the negro on the remoter reaches of the Orinoco river, it thoroughly respects them.

It will hence be understood that when Hanbury rose immediately after the Chancellor of the Exchequer's notice to move a war vote on Monday next, there was some curiosity felt as to what he might do in this *galère*. What he did was to ask, in his grave manner, whether the Russian terms of peace had been communicated to the Government? Stafford Northcote, who seemed terribly afraid of saying a word too much, tersely answered that they had not. Then, in that odd way in which big and little things are jumbled in the House of Commons, Sampson Lloyd gave notice of a Bill to amend the law relating to Bills of Sale. Hartington, having arrived, asserted his right to the position of leader of the Opposition, temporarily assumed by Hanbury, and categorically examining the Chancellor of the Exchequer, drew from him a declaration of the determination of the Government to seek an answer from Russia if need were at the cannon's mouth.

In some Chambers, the French for example, such an episode would have been followed by an adjournment of the House. But the English are a great and business-like people ; and the House, having assisted at something which nine out of ten men were inclined to regard as the preliminaries of a declaration of war, set itself calmly to consider the question of appointing a Select Committee to inquire into the best method of conducting public business. Stafford Northcote, as leader of the House, had charge of this motion, and he performed his duty with characteristic imperturbability. But he made his speech as short as possible, and, when it was finished, there came a hurried messenger, who called out all the Cabinet Ministers. The House watched their departure with growing uneasiness. Things must be critical when a Cabinet Council should be summoned in the middle of a debate. More and more Members drifted into the lobby, where it was possible to talk, and where little groups were gathered excitedly discussing events. Still the business of the House must be carried on, and between thirty and

forty Members remained to discuss the appointment of the Committee.

This is one of the rare occasions when Charles Forster, temporarily suspending his wanderings through the precincts of the House, addresses the Speaker. Dodson, emphatically placing his hat on the table, delivered a judicial summing-up of the *pros* and *cons*, and was followed on the other side by Raikes, who had previously undergone ten minutes' training in his private room so as to enable him to approach the table, and address the House without first calling "Order, order." Irish Members had marked the evening for their own, and had placed several amendments on the paper, with the intention of improving on the Government proposals. The intimate acquaintance of Irish Members with the forms of the House, and their authority on the subject, could not be questioned. But even they found it impossible to get up a squabble within sound of the muttering of what might prove a mighty war. Biggar described at some length how "it seems to me, Mr. Speaker." But the encouraging sound of dissent was lacking; he presently subsided, and a debate which, under other circumstances, might have occupied the best part of a week, was over in a couple of hours.

At this crisis, the staying power of Scotland, as compared with that of Ireland, was triumphantly demonstrated. Like the French army, the Irish Members have dash and brilliancy, and will fight all night, and far into the next day, if they can only secure a little attention. The Scotch are more like the Germans in a memorable campaign. They do not make much preparatory noise on undertaking their work. But they go at it steadily, and stick to it persistently, regardless of extraneous circumstances. To-night the Roads and Bridges (Scotland) Bill came on for discussion, and, in presence of its supreme interest, as involving tolls and county rates, what was the Russian advance on Gallipoli, or even the occupation of Constantinople? Barclay, in his harsh, dry, uninviting manner, which irresistibly reminds one of a field-gate at issue with its hinges, discussed the measure at length and in detail. Ramsay had prepared a few remarks on the subject, and was not to be deterred from delivering them because her Majesty's Government had, at the last moment, taken a somersault into the troubled sea of a spirited foreign policy. George Campbell, turning aside for a moment his

thoughts from India, took the House a Scotch mile and a bittock down a somewhat uneven turnpike-road. Then Yeaman, who was able to give a silent vote on the Royal Titles Bill, felt his spirit stirred within him at the sight of the Roads and Bridges Bill on the table, and showed the House how much it had to be thankful for when less exciting topics permit him to maintain his usual habit of masterly silence.

Jan. 26.—Resig-
nation of Lord
Carnarvon.

At times of political crises the House of Commons has the advantage over the House of Lords, inasmuch as its business commences half an hour earlier, and as on those occasions it is the custom to make identical ministerial statements, the House of Commons has precedence in learning the secrets of the Cabinet. To-night the House was crowded in every part, not least in that portion of the gallery set apart for the convenience of peers. Amongst the score of Lords present was Granville. All the Ministers having seats in the Lower House were in their places, and the only conspicuous Minister absent was Gladstone. He arrived two hours later, and though he had not the opportunity of hearing the statement made in either House, he had full reports volunteered to him by various members.

Hartington, rising as soon as the questions were concluded, was received with loud cheers from the Opposition. He had, he said, several questions to put, which he numbered down to six. In replying, Northcote somewhat indignantly protested against the imputation that he or the Government should have been guilty of such a suppression of the truth as was involved in the presumption, that when on Thursday they had given notice of intention to move for a supplementary estimate they had been in possession of the Russian terms of peace. "We had," he said, "no knowledge of anything of the kind." In the course of Thursday evening a certain communication of a non-official character was made to the Government, which led to the impression that peace negotiations had gone further than they had suspected. Yesterday morning they had received a communication from the Russian Ambassador, containing the heads of certain bases of terms of peace. But what these heads were he was not at liberty to inform the House, as their communication had been of a confidential kind.

Movements of the Fleet. On Wednesday, he proceeded to say in further reply to Hartington, the Government decided that an order should be sent to the fleet to proceed to the Dardanelles, to keep open the water-way, and so provide for the preservation of the lives and property of British subjects, in the event of there being any tumult in Constantinople. This announcement was greeted by loud cheers from the Ministerial side. But when he added that, in consequence of the mysterious communication received last night, orders had been sent out to the fleet arresting it at the mouth of the Dardanelles, cheers broke forth from the Liberal side, and being answered from the opposite benches, there ensued a scene, during which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had several moments in which to re-arrange his notes. On the point of Ministerial resignation, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not authorised to make any statement.

This covered the principal inquiries of Hartington, and it being five o'clock, the hour at which the House of Lords was opened, there was a sudden and simultaneous rush towards the door in order to get places. Cries of "Order!" on the part of members who had no such intention, or who saw the hopelessness of joining in the throng, were unavailing to calm the tumult, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer hastily concluded his speech by protesting that there was not a line in the instructions issued by the Government which they would have any objection to communicate to the House at the proper time; and, finally, that the supplementary estimate would be for the sum of six millions.

In the Lords. The House of Lords proper was by no means crowded; but all the avenues of approach and the galleries set aside for members and strangers were thronged. The whole of the space behind the steps of the throne was occupied, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and other Ministers whose dignity or whose business engagements had not allowed them to gain a place in the front rank of the flying column, being content to stand on the outermost fringe of the crowd. A little boy of some seven or eight years of age had the place of honour in the front rank, and, hanging

his straw hat over the rails, occupied himself with swinging it to and fro whilst at a national crisis a Cabinet Minister was stating the cause of his resignation.

This part of the House is reserved for members of the Privy Council or the eldest sons of Peers. But Waddy, who comes within neither category, had in the excitement of the moment joined the wrong stream entering the House, and, undisturbed, enjoyed the advantage of hearing the debate from this favoured part of the House.

Shortly after the Lord Chancellor took his seat on the wool-sack, Sandwich rose and asked whether the terms of peace had been received from Russia. The Premier replied that they had not, though information had reached the Government which justified them in countermanding the order to the fleet to enter the Dardanelles. Carnarvon entered the House shortly after five, and took his accustomed seat on the Ministerial bench. As the Prime Minister resumed his seat, Carnarvon rose, and commenced what proved to be a long statement, describing in detail the history of his divergence from his colleagues in the Cabinet, a divergence which he announced had resulted in his placing his resignation in the hands of Her Majesty, who had accepted it. Amongst much other interesting matter, Carnarvon stated that, on the morning after his famous speech to the deputation at the Colonial Office, the Prime Minister had thought proper to condemn very severely the terms in which he had spoken on the Eastern question. Carnarvon had then defended himself, and as no public denial of his position had been made, he had felt himself justified in believing that he had not grossly mis-stated the views of Her Majesty's Government. On the 12th inst. the question was mooted in the Cabinet of despatching the fleet to the Dardanelles; but no decision was then taken. On the 15th it was decided that the fleet should be despatched, a determination Carnarvon strongly opposed, believing that under existing circumstances, "or anything like them," there was no reason for active intervention on the part of England. The decision of the 15th was held over till Thursday, when, being carried into effect, and Carnarvon being under the conviction that the Government were changing their attitude of observation for one of menace, he sent in his resignation, which was accepted.

The noble lord was listened to with profound attention

throughout a somewhat lengthy speech, interrupted in one or two places by Opposition cheers. When he resumed his seat on the front Ministerial bench there was a brief pause, and then Beaconsfield, rising, declared that he was not able to recognise in the statement just made a sufficient reason for Carnarvon's "quitting the counsels of his Sovereign." The personal portion of the matter the Premier briefly dismissed, and proceeded to show how "the charter of our policy is the despatch of May," in which British interests were chiefly, though not entirely, indicated. The object of sending the fleet to the Dardanelles was to guard those interests. He repeated assertions already familiar, to the effect that the policy of the Government had never changed, and even—though, warned by a slight movement on the Opposition benches, he proceeded to qualify the affirmation—that there had been no division in the Cabinet. The Government were resolved to maintain the policy of neutrality loudly announced and generally accepted. But if neutrality meant that the honour and interests of England were not to be vindicated and defended, he was no longer in favour of neutrality. This last sentiment was loudly cheered from the Ministerial benches.

Granville quietly observed that he did not rise for the purpose of continuing the discussion entered into between the noble lords opposite, but rather to put a series of questions. These were identical in substance with those set forth in the other House by Hartington and answered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There was no notable difference in the answers, except that Beaconsfield, elaborately replying that there was no armistice, and that the Cabinet knew of no armistice, Granville asked was it possible that the noble lord had no knowledge of the terms of the armistice, and yet had countermanded the order to the fleet at the Dardanelles.

In a confused manner, contrasting strongly with his ordinary easy almost jaunty address, the Premier explained the difference between an armistice and proposed terms of peace. But he had recovered his old manner when he came to answer the question repeated by Granville as to whether it was true that any other member of the Cabinet had resigned. It was, the Premier said, one of the highest and most cherished privileges of members of the Ministry that whenever they found it necessary to sever

their connection with their colleagues, they should make a statement on the subject, and that was a privilege upon which he would not trench. Thus the debate ended amid hearty laughter, and the House immediately thinning, presently adjourned.

Jan. 28. — Rumours of Lord Derby's resignation.

Granville, seeing Derby in his place, congratulated him upon his restoration to health, and expressed a hope that he would be able to afford the House an explanation of the circumstances that had led

to the recent rumours of his resignation.

On the general question at issue Derby in reply went back to the despatch of May as setting forth the policy of the Government, and insisted that from that policy the Government had never swerved. The Government had not yet received the full text of the bases of peace; but they claimed, as other countries would claim, a right to a voice in the final settlement. As for the matter personal to himself, he briefly dismissed it with the remark that a step had been decided upon by the Government with which he could not agree, and had therefore tendered his resignation. Within thirty-six hours circumstances had so far changed that the Government were no longer bound to take the meditated step, and he found himself able to withdraw the tender of his resignation.

"In straits." The following verse is current in the House to-night :—

"When Government ordered the fleet to the Straits,
They surely encountered the hardest of fates;
For the order, scarce given, at once was recalled,
And the Russians were not in the slightest appalled.
And every one says, who has heard the debates,
'It's the Cabinet now, not the fleet, that's in straits!'"

CHAPTER XXV.

A VOTE OF CREDIT.

Mr. Henley—Mr. Forster—Mr. Cross—Some new Home Rulers—The Vote of Credit—Dramatic Scenes—The Russians advancing—The Russians not advancing—Fresh Doubts—Mr. Edward Jenkins settles Matters.

Jan. 29. — Mr. Henley. New writ for Oxfordshire moved in the place of Henley.

Henley, "father of the House of Commons." The fact involved in this formal action was not unfamiliar, for everybody knew that Henley had determined to bring to a close his long connection with the House of Commons. But the announcement fell like a shock on the crowded House, and was borne with varied emotions. Some, a very few, remember Henley when, already passing the line of middle age, he was a constant participator in debate and an active power in the House. Others, a larger number, remember him when, with physical power fast waning, he still sometimes interposed in debate, and might reasonably be expected to take part in discussion on any subject with which he was more particularly associated. With a third section, and this by far the most numerous, Henley was the embodiment of a tradition regarded with respect and veneration, because it was Parliamentary etiquette to do so, just as much as it is to bow to the Speaker on entering or leaving the House.

For many years he has lived upon a reputation obtained before the epoch of the present Parliamentary generation. In spite of Reform Bills and Radical tendencies, Conservatism has a wonderfully strong hold on the House of Commons, and new members in particular are quite enthusiastic in their respect for Parliamentary reputation. It was the new members who kept up the laughter which to the last encouraged Bernal Osborne in rudeness of speech. It was the new members of the last Parliament who uproariously laughed when Locke was on his legs, and it is from the new members that Henley has of late years received the most respectful veneration. They walked by faith, having nothing to sustain them but this

pathetic figure of a venerable man, saying nothing particular in a quavering voice. But, as Bernal Osborne once made a reputation for being funny, and as Locke, by means which it is difficult to discover, managed to establish a character for humour, so Henley comes down to the present generation crowned with the bays of victories won when our fathers and uncles were in Parliament.

Thus it came to pass that young members held their breath when Henley rose, and deferentially bent forward to catch the drops of wisdom which fell distilled from his lips. His Parliamentary success in days long gone by was acquired by the legitimate influence of directness of speech, and the exercise of common-sense. He had a habit of lifting things off the lofty Parliamentary chimney-piece, and, holding them in his hand, he would explain their true proportions, and call them by their right names. Probably if he had sat on the Liberal benches, he would have attracted no particular attention. But being a country gentleman, a member for a county, and a Tory, there was something notable in his original way of looking at things, and in his abstention from circumlocutory phrase in describing them. He crowned the edifice of his reputation when he resigned a largely-salaried office on a question of conscience. That was nearly twenty years ago, and since then Henley has sat always in the same place—the corner of the second bench behind the leaders of the Conservative Party—and must have witnessed with curiosity, not unmixed with amusement, the growth of his reputation and influence.

Of late years it has come to be part of the Member of Parliament's creed to accept with veneration any axiom uttered by Henley. If with slow enunciation and a voice which seemed to be brought up from profounder depths than ordinary men can compass, the member for Oxfordshire had observed that it was "a fine day," a thrill of respectful marvel at his singular power of discernment, at his curiously accurate observation, at his native common-sense, at his direct way of putting things, and at his sturdy independence of thought, would have vibrated throughout the House, and the soul of the youngest member would have been filled with admiration. In times past Henley would have been the first to laugh at this fetish-worship, and would have found a very plain word to describe it. As it was,

he accepted it as a circumstance over which he had no control; and it must be recorded of him as among not the least of his many claims to esteem and admiration, that he never abused the honourable sentiment, and judiciously refrained from imposing himself on a fatally willing audience. He has gone his way into honourable retirement, and the feeling of the House of Commons is akin to that with which members would learn that the mace had gone astray.

Jan. 31. — Mr. Forster. The most satisfactory phase of the Eastern

Question I have noticed for some time is that to-day Forster has, to quote a familiar railway station advertisement, had "a wash and brush up." If the future historian would know how many times in the course of a long and useful career Forster has had his hair brushed, and has taken some pains to dissipate the dark suspicion which hangs about the existence of his shirt-front, he would do well to count up the number of occasions when he has come forward and made a speech on a critical Parliamentary question. Forster does not care for these little vanities himself, but he feels that something is due to a great party, and he would not have the prospects of Liberal triumph obscured for lack of any personal sacrifice on his own part. On ordinary nights his hair might be taken as a symbol of the Liberal Administration out of office. To-night the astonished fibres were combed and brushed till they looked as smooth and united as a Conservative Cabinet with Carnarvon driven out.

Forster possibly felt the advisability of paying unusual attention to his personal appearance, inasmuch as the position he holds to-night is an exceedingly embarrassing one. He did not expect a warm welcome from members opposite; and he had too good reason to suppose that on his own side his interposition was regarded as an intrusion. The circumstances were in some respects analogous to those recorded in the Ingoldsby Legend, when the manager of the Haymarket Theatre wanted to impose "Fal-de-ral-tit" on an audience that hungered after "Fiddle-de-dee." The Opposition thought that the occasion was one when they might expect to be led into action by Hartington; and there was an uncomfortable suspicion that Forster had shouldered himself into the prominent position he occupied.

Probably it may be that the suspicion is altogether groundless, that Forster only accepted the position after a long struggle with the unanimous desire of his colleagues. However that may be, the uncomfortable feeling existed, and was only partially mollified by the surprisingly tidy and highly creditable appearance of the right hon. gentleman.

Mr. Cross. It is much easier for a Conservative to address the House than for a Liberal. Liberals may be all very well in their private relations. They may be faithful husbands, good fathers, and desirable uncles. But they do not know how to cheer a man who speaks on their own side. The Conservatives do; and the moral effect of good hearty enthusiastic cheering is by no means immaterial.

It probably had an important influence upon Cross just now, and is largely responsible for the extraordinary speech he delivered. Cross is not what the impartial observer would call a large man. He is an admirable Home Secretary, perhaps by reason of the absence of certain qualities which become apparent when he poses as a statesman.

It happened, by accident, one night last Session, that he was put up to define the foreign policy of the Government. A clear-headed man, accustomed to group details and to marshal facts, he evolved out of the confused heap of assertion, denial, definition, and modification, a statement of policy so precise and unmistakable that it has ever since been used as a sort of text-book. I have heard that no one was more surprised than Beaconsfield when next morning he read Cross's statement on the foreign policy of the Government. He had no idea that, being reduced to plain language, it meant just that. Being drawn out in convenient form it was well to adopt it; and so it has been accepted in Ministerial speech ever since. The personal consequence to Cross was that he suddenly found himself in a position which, in his calmer moments, he feels Providence never designed him to fill. He went to bed a sort of superior chairman of Quarter Sessions, capable even of successfully conducting the business of the Home Office, and discovered, whilst stirring his morning cup of coffee, that he was a statesman and an authority on foreign politics.

He concealed his emotions of surprise, and has ever since care-

fully cultivated the science of statecraft. One flaw in his first effort was that a naturally ingenuous mind, and a habit of logical thought acquired in the course of legal studies, led him, when he came to formulate the policy of British Ministers, to arrive at a statement not altogether pleasing to intelligent country gentlemen and to the more polished members of society, whose gentle instincts find a natural alliance with the Turk. There were some who even suspected the Home Secretary of being one of those Russian agents who are sown broadcast throughout England, and who have managed to work themselves even into the highest official places. It was exceedingly annoying to a man of his mental calibre and newly-budding ambition to have the Opposition continually quoting his speech of last Session, and insisting upon pinning the Ministry down to it.

Cross determined to change all that, and, to do him justice, he has succeeded. I have heard many speeches by Cabinet Ministers, but do not remember any that equals, in respect of lack of dignity and of true appreciation of the position of an English Minister speaking on a question of foreign policy at a European crisis, the one delivered by Cross to-night. It was the cheers that began it, and the continuance of the cheers that finished it. The intoxication of the boisterous applause got into Cross's head, and when, immediately after, Wilfrid Lawson rose, I really thought he was going to give notice to include unreasoning party applause among the intoxicating influences, the operation of which it is desirable to limit by Act of Parliament.

All the mannerisms that spoil Cross's speeches were aggravated. The impressive but also, unfortunately, inaudible whisper, with which he concludes a sentence intended to be particularly striking; his sharp, jerky manner of looking over papers, and his general air of self-satisfaction, a sentiment that would find untimely utterance if he did not at convenient pauses tightly close his lips—each found intensified expression. Mentally, the insidious stimulant had an equally disastrous effect. The cool judgment, the fair speech, the honourable interpretation of adverse arguments, all disappeared, and in their place there was presented the spectacle of an ordinarily staid Cabinet Minister dancing whilst gentlemen of the mental calibre of Sir William Fraser and the Admiral piped.

Feb. 1.—Some Callan has started a new paper in Dublin called
 new Home the *Vindicator*. With pardonable pride he sends
 Rulers. an early copy for the reading-room. Among the
 contents is an alphabetical list of the Home Rule members. The
 first name on the list is, properly enough, that of Mr. Butt, and
 next in due order that of Philip Callan. Then follow less dis-
 tinguished, but not unknown, names, till near the end we come
 upon the following three lines :

Wm H O'Sullivan, A M Sullivan, W H O'Leary, Nicholas
 Flour quiet. Indian corn easier — New mixed
 Ennis, Charles S Parnell, Richard Power.

Feb. 4.—The Vote An absence of special interest in their own
 of Credit. House afforded the peers an opportunity of visit-
 ing the other, in which they largely availed themselves. By
 half-past four every seat in the gallery of the House of Com-
 mons appropriated to them was occupied, amongst the early
 arrivals being Prince Leopold, the Crown Prince of Austria,
 and Prince Christian. Just before five o'clock, whilst Glad-
 stone was among the early sentences of his speech, the Prince of
 Wales, accompanied by the Duke of Teck, entered, and two
 lords who had secured favourable places on the front bench were
 dispossessed. The Princess of Wales occupied a place in the
 Speaker's department of the ladies' gallery, which she has not
 visited for many years. Among the peers who managed to
 retain their seats, and who remained throughout the debate,
 were the Duke of Argyll, the Marquis of Ripon, the Earl of
 Rosebery, Lord Houghton, the Earl of Airlie, Lord Monck,
 Lord Wolverton, and in the far corner, amid a crowd half within
 and half out of the House, was visible the face of Lord
 Carlingford.

It is needless to add that the other galleries open to the
 public were crowded to their fullest capacity, Lord Chief Justice
 Cockburn, not discouraged by the dulness of Friday night's
 debate, renewing his visit. As for the House itself, it was fuller
 than it has been on any night of this Session. Every seat on
 the floor was occupied, whilst the galleries on either side were
 filled to overflowing, members, who literally could not find seats,
 standing in clusters near the doors.

There were very few notices, and the buzz of conversation

which always preludes an exciting or an important sitting in the House of Commons prevented their delivery from being heard. Gladstone, in anticipation of whose speech this magnificent audience had assembled, was early in his place, and took the opportunity of a brief interlude to submit to Bright, who sat next to him, a selection from his voluminous correspondence, which included many newspaper extracts and one or two illustrations. Even as he went through letters already in stock others arrived, and were passed along the front bench till they reached his hand.

A loud cry of "Order!" greeted the rising of Hartington, and presently succeeded in quieting the conversation which had hitherto been incessantly in progress. The noble lord wanted to know whether Northcote was in a position to give the House any information with reference to the terms of peace and the armistice. Northcote answered that the only official information they had received was in the form of a despatch from the Turkish Foreign Minister to the Ottoman Ambassador in this country, which was to the effect that on the 3rd of February the plenipotentiaries of the Russian and Turkish Governments had signed the protocol of the bases of peace and the armistice, and that orders had been given for the cessation of hostilities. This announcement was received with some cheering, coming more particularly from the Opposition benches.

At ten minutes to five Gladstone rose, and was received with loud cheers from the Opposition. He was careful at the beginning to disclaim any intention of entering upon controversial matters, and expressed his desire of arriving, if possible, at a solution of all differences and difficulties. These preliminary remarks, spoken in a quiet and earnest tone, were met with a mocking laugh from below the gangway on the benches opposite. Gladstone, turning in the direction whence the interruption came, said—

"I am extremely sorry that before a word has fallen from my lips that should excite the susceptibilities of gentlemen opposite, it has been thought necessary thus to receive the sentiment expressed."

This rebuke was supported by loud cheers from the Opposition benches, and for some time had the desired effect. In reference to the part he had taken in the controversy, Glad-

stone took occasion to observe that whilst in the course of his speeches he had never made an imputation on the motives of any man, no speech had been made in which his actions were criticised without imputing motives to him—though he acknowledged an honourable exception in the case of Hardinge Giffard's address to his constituents.

Turning to consider the proposal before the House, he asked what was the object of the Government, and arrived at the conclusion that it was described in the vague and now altogether irrelevant proposal that we are to protect British interests. For himself he described it as a perfectly unreal vote, emphatically declaring that there were no contrivances within the regular way of business in which the Government could spend six millions before the 31st of March, the time within which the money must be spent. Drawing upon his own personal experience, he stated that in 1854, at the time when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, war against Russia was declared in the latter end of March. From that time forward no effort was spared by the military and naval departments to meet the crisis, and they were so far successful that an army was sent into the Crimea, and the battle of Alma was fought. After six months of war the whole of the expenditure was found to be within a few hundred thousands of pounds paid out of the ordinary revenues of the country. The cost of the Crimean War was about eighty millions. The amount of charges incurred in the first half of the time, in twelve out of the twenty-four months, was six millions odd—as nearly as possible the sum they were now asked to vote.

This statement made an evident impression on both sides, and was followed by cheering from the Opposition benches when Gladstone went on to demonstrate that it was hardly possible for any ingenuity of extravagance to get any considerable portion of six million sovereigns into payment before the 31st of March. The vote was designed to create a moral effect, and that might have been better done if the Government had imposed taxes. He spoke in ironical terms of the great effort made to enter into the mood of heroism, ending in a resolution to add six millions to the National Debt. It was the duty of the House of Commons sternly to refuse to lay charges on the people without proof that they were required.

"Cannot you," he asked amid cheers, "express confidence in the Government without charging the people?"

He thought they might, and after expatiating upon the undesirability of appearing as a divided nation, he proceeded to show how it might be done: let the vote be postponed, with the understanding that it might be brought forward again whenever the Government felt the necessity. In the meantime an Address to the Crown should be prepared, and presented in the name of both Houses of Parliament, expressing a desire to unite in supporting the action of the Government in the councils of Europe. Having set forth this proposal in some detail and sketched the terms of the address, Gladstone sat down, having spoken for an hour and fifty minutes.

The reception of this proposal was very significant. Members on the opposite benches, more particularly below the gangway, are, as was shown at the outset of the speech, exceedingly quick to deride the ex-Premier, and even ostentatiously to scorn his advice. They listened to this proposal with attention, and so far from volunteering derision had not even answered the cheers with which it was welcomed from the Opposition benches.

When Hardy rose there was profound anxiety to hear how he would treat these overtures of peace. The House was not left long in doubt. With something more than his usual vigour he, after a few prefatory sentences, turned upon Gladstone, and with uplifted arm and stentorian voice declared that those who had within a few days addressed excited audiences outside the House had no business to come there, and with bated breath and whispered humbleness talk of conciliatory measures. Having demolished Gladstone, and growing more and more excited with the cheers that burst forth from the now-excited Ministerialists, Hardy turned upon Trevelyan, and held him up to contumely and scorn as a man who had "dared to say" that Lord Beaconsfield had never disguised his desire to plunge England into war.

"Let him," Hardy said, or rather shouted—"let him prove that statement, or let it go under some category which it is not Parliamentary to name!"

He would make no terms with the Opposition, declaring at the end of a long speech, which contained matter already familiar through much repetition, that "we have kept the peace, we mean to keep the peace, and we ask you to assist us."

It was just eight o'clock when Hardy concluded his speech, fully an hour beyond the time at which the House usually thins in obedience to the call of the dinner bell. A score or two had gone away when Gladstone had finished ; but on the whole the House kept well together, the Prince of Wales being among the most attentive listeners. But now His Royal Highness rose to go, and already, whilst Pease was on his feet making an endeavour to continue the discussion, the floor of the House was thronged with members hurrying out.

Feb. 7.—Drama- House again crowded to-night, though not to so
tic scenes. great an extent as on Monday. The aspect of the assembly was also different, and it was not difficult to surmise, from the eager attention paid to Ministerial statements in any way touching the Eastern Question, that everybody was anxiously awaiting an important announcement. As soon as the questions on the paper were disposed of, Hartington asked whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer could give any information as to the foundation for the report current that the Russians had occupied Constantinople.

The Russians Amid breathless silence, the Chancellor of the
advancing. Exchequer, who for greater accuracy had brought his answer written out, said that a telegram had been received from Mr. Layard, dated the 5th inst., which stated that, notwithstanding the armistice, the Russians were pushing on towards Constantinople, and that they had compelled the Turks to evacuate important positions on the line of defence. The despatch added that the Porte was at the time "in great alarm," and could not understand the proceedings of the Russians. The Servians were also advancing. It was five days since the bases of peace had been signed, and the Protocol had not yet reached the Porte. The Russians had insisted, as one of the conditions of the armistice, that the lines of defence of Constantinople should be left open.

From the same papers the Chancellor of the Exchequer read a telegram from the Grand Duke Nicholas at Adrianople, stating that orders had been given on the 31st January to cease hostilities, and Stafford Northcote could not undertake to reconcile these statements. Lord Derby had that morning

telegraphed to St. Petersburg asking for explanations, and calling the attention of the Czar to his declaration made to Colonel Wellesley in July, that he would not occupy Constantinople unless by military necessity.

Amid the buzz of excited conversation which followed on the reading of these documents, Forster rose and declared he could not deny that the aspect of affairs in the East had been greatly changed by the information just given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Whilst reserving to himself perfect freedom in Committee, he now proposed to withdraw the amendment to the vote of credit of which he had given notice. This proposal was received with cheers, amid which were some cries of "Negative!"

Hartington suggested that Rylands, who was to have renewed the debate, should forego his intention. Rylands, on rising to reply, was greeted with laughter and ironical cheering, against which he warmly protested. An interruption now arose, the Speaker noticing the new member for Oxfordshire, Colonel Harcourt, standing at the Bar, called him up to take the oaths. This done, the orders of the day were called on in usual form, and Forster formally withdrew his amendment. In reply to Rylands, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said he saw no reason for adjourning the debate, which drew forth loud cheers from the Ministerialists. The information, he said, was of a more or less serious character, but it was nothing different from what the Government had expected, and they would stultify themselves by agreeing to an adjournment.

Fawcett supported the suggestion for an adjournment, which was opposed by Watkin Williams, who hoped that the House at this critical moment would not display the melancholy spectacle of a divided nation. Hopwood, amid cries of "Withdraw," expressed his doubts of the authenticity of the information received, seeing that it came from Layard, an allusion which called forth angry cries from the Ministerialists. E. J. Reed and Joseph Cowen rising together, there were cries for the latter, but he, yielding place, Reed proposed to "get rid of this question of money in order to consider in a large-minded and magnanimous manner" the only question this country ought to consider—namely, its policy at the Congress.

Cowen rose again, and with him Waddy. But there being

again loud cries of "Cowen! Cowen!" the member for Newcastle addressed the House in brief but impassioned sentences, declaring, amid cheering from the Ministerial side of the House, that when national interests were at stake patriotism and good sense demanded that men should not be there as Tories, or Radicals, or Liberals, but as Englishmen.

"Let us," he cried, "unanimously vote this money. That will be the best answer to the Russian advance on Constantinople."

The House was by this time in a state of high excitement, the patriotism of members below the gangway on the Ministerial side running so high that they threatened to prevent the withdrawal of Forster's amendment, insisting upon the triumph of having it put from the chair and formally negatived. Hartington, to clear up this point, asked Ministers what they proposed to do, and intimated that if the amendment were not allowed to be withdrawn he and his friends, instead of withdrawing their amendment, would withdraw themselves. Hardy thought that "as an unconditional withdrawal it would be accepted."

Recurring to the terms of the telegram which had wrought such a change in the House, Bright pointed out that there was very little in it that did not require confirmation.

"Our Ambassador at the Porte," he said, amid Opposition cheers and laughter, "has been alarmed several times."

The movements alluded to were probably a matter of arrangement between Turkey and Russia, and, therefore, in no degree altered the position either as regards the interests or the objects of this country. He thought the true interests of the country, and the true dignity of Parliament, would be best consulted by a cessation of the discussion till the House was enabled to know the precise condition of affairs.

Whilst Bright was speaking a letter arrived at the Treasury bench and was passed up to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Whatever its contents might be, it evidently created a considerable impression on Stafford Northcote and his colleagues, to whom it was immediately shown. As Bright resumed his seat, the House being even in a more heightened state of excitement, owing to some reference made by him to the Crimean War, the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose and intimated that he had something to say of much importance.

The Russians A quick movement of members on both sides not advancing. followed, as every one bent forward to hear what was to be said. This brought about a renewal of the solemn silence which had by exception prevailed when Stafford Northcote answered Hartington's first question. He now announced that he had just received from Lord Derby a communication addressed to the Ambassador of Russia in this country by Prince Gortschakoff, and which declared that there was not a word of truth in the reports to which Count Schouvaloff had called the Russian Chancellor's attention.

Loud cheers burst forth from the Opposition benches, whilst the Ministerialists sat silent and puzzled. The Chancellor of the Exchequer expressed his regret that the circumstances should have been of so dramatic a character, and repeated that the view of the Government was in no way altered by these current incidents. Harcourt asked, in the interests of the peace of England and the world, what steps her Majesty's Government would take to arrange for the receipt of trustworthy news with regard to events in Constantinople.

The Speaker was about to put the question, when Fawcett rose, and pointing out that the House was now in precisely the same position as it was last Tuesday, asked what was the intention of Forster with respect to his amendment. The Ministerialists had now recovered their spirits, and joined in the loud laughter which this inquiry gave rise to. Forster promptly replied that he thought on the whole it was best for his amendment to be withdrawn, and that the debate should proceed on the proposal of the Government. Gladstone, who was received with loud cheers, said the remarkable news they had heard from the Chancellor of the Exchequer filled him with astonishment and dismay. The despatch of Mr. Layard, which had been read in the earlier part of the evening, did not contain a word of qualification.

"If," he added, "the Ambassador is not right, he is tremendously wrong. If he is right, the position of affairs is greatly changed."

Under these circumstances, he thought it was a very reasonable request that the debate should be adjourned for twenty-four hours. In reply to a question from Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, the Chancellor of the Exchequer explained that the telegram

he had read from Prince Gortschakoff was in reply to a question addressed to him by Count Schouvaloff, and of course he could not say what were the terms of the question it answered.

Fresh doubts. A doubt of a fresh character now prevailed in the

House, and members were audibly asking each other which rumour did the reply of Prince Gortschakoff refer to. Were they those that formed the basis of Mr. Layard's communication, or were they others of prior date? The Chancellor of the Exchequer protested that he could give no information beyond what he had laid before the House, and he "only hoped that the House would now proceed with the discussion."

During the first half-hour of the sitting, the gallery allotted for the convenience of peers was crowded, amongst others present being Earl Granville, Lord Halifax, the Earl of Airlie, Lord Carlingford, the Earl of Rosebery, Lord Northbrook, the Marquis of Ripon, Lord Selborne, Lord Skelmersdale, and the Duke of Argyll. These noble lords remained spectators of the curious and animated scene till ten minutes past five, when they hurried away to their own chamber, where they heard from Lord Derby statements identical in form and almost in language with those simultaneously made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. As soon as the business was over, the peers returned, and occupied in great force their former positions in the gallery. They found the House engaged in discussing the question whether the debate should or should not be adjourned—"squabbling about little points," Peel described the proceedings in a prefatory remark to a speech in which he at some length lectured Gladstone and Bright for a statement understood by him to have been made in their speeches.

In the course of the conversation Wilfrid Lawson created a diversion by appealing to the First Lord of the Admiralty, who, he said, had not yet spoken on the Eastern Question, and to whom he desired to give an opportunity. He had two questions to ask, first, whether, since the telegram from Mr. Layard had been received, he had given orders to the fleet to go anywhere; and second, if he had done so, whether he had since sent an order to recall it. The merriment created by this sally turned to sudden gloom when Mitchell Henry rose and informed the House that though Irish members had abstained from partici-

pation in the debate as long as it referred to Forster's amendment, gentlemen would be "very much mistaken" if they supposed that in Committee Irish members would longer preserve silence.

Eventually Forster's amendment was withdrawn, and the debate was renewed on the succeeding motion that the Speaker leave the chair.

Feb. 14. — Mr.
Edward Jen-
kins settles
matters.

Vote of Credit up again to-night in final form of Bill. To one man the occasion was a serious and solemn one. Edward Jenkins had watched the course of events with gathering gloom. A man of large mind, philanthropic instincts, just judgment, and, withal, of modest mien, he had hitherto sat silent and observant. It was not for him to deprive other men of the credit or the satisfaction of settling affairs. If they could do it, let them. He had his doubts. But, at least, let it not be said that he interposed hastily or withheld the opportunity. Thus he had not spoken in the greater debate; nor had he availed himself of openings eagerly seized by lesser men during the supplementary discussion. But now he might hold his speech no longer. The Ministry pleased him not, nor the Opposition either. From the moral eminence of his corner seat below the gangway, he looked forth upon this little Parliamentary world, and, behold! it was very bad. No one could say he had not given it a fair chance. But there comes a time when compassion is criminal, when mercy is a mistake, and when justice must be done though the heavens fall. Jove may not for ever withhold his thunderbolts; and here, with a sad, stern expression on his face, with left hand partly hid in his trouser pocket, and right extended in terrible denunciation, he now launches bolts upon a shuddering Ministry and a shrinking Opposition.

It was piteous to see Stafford Northcote literally clasp himself in his own arms as the voice, issuing from the mask-like face, thundered out the reference to an "invertibrate Ministry." John Manners, who trembled like an aspen leaf, put his hand behind his back, to see how far Jenkins's depreciatory expression applied to him. Cross affected to read despatches; Gathorne Hardy furtively drew up a memorandum of instructions to the Colonels, supposing things should come to the worst; whilst W.

H. Smith, who has not yet been able to overcome his life-long associations with peaceable pursuits, went out of the House on the base pretence of having to post a letter.

On the front Opposition bench, a natural hardihood stood gentlemen in good stead. Gladstone, with his head bent back and his eyes fast closed, feigned sleep. Hartington, with both hands in his pockets, and his knees crossed, stared straight up at the ceiling. But Forster threw off all pretence, and presented an appearance of abject, hopeless terror that would require the pen of Danté to describe, or the pencil of Blake to draw. Partly owing to the fact that he sat at the end of the bench nearest to Jenkins, and principally, perhaps, because a Quaker parentage and an ingenuous mind forbade any of those tricks which more or less befit others, Forster was not able to command at a moment's notice the little artifices by which those near him concealed their perturbation.

When Jenkins unexpectedly rose to speak, Forster was in more than usually good spirits. On Monday night, Hartington being, as usual, a little late, he had found an opportunity of appearing as leader of the Opposition, and in that capacity questioned the Government. To-night he had also arrived first, and though Hartington, being in his place, put the usual questions, Forster had secured the seat almost opposite the box, and, by a few strategic contortions of the shoulders, was gradually edging the unconscious marquis lower down, a task which, finally accomplished, would leave him in full possession of the leader's seat. But as Jenkins proceeded with his terrible denunciation, Forster gradually became subdued in manner and limper in appearance. His body slowly sank into the seat, and his legs were stretched out farther and farther towards the setting sun. Slowly his head dropped on his chest, till, before the indictment was concluded, he was foreshortened in a miraculous manner, the peers, from their position in the gallery, having left in view only a quantity of rough hair and a pair of legs.

It was a terrible episode, a thrilling scene, a perilous treading on the confines of tragedy. If Jenkins had only gone on for another quarter of an hour, he would, like Lamech, have been ready to exclaim, "I have slain a man to my wounding, a young man to my hurt." As it was, having used up most of the bad words in the language, and observing that

the audience was gradually dwindling down to the vanishing point, owing to continual flight of terror-stricken hearers, the denunciation came to a close whilst there yet remained sufficient vitality in Forster to lead to his restoration.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL DEVELOPS.

Personal Prejudice—The Admiral in the Doldrums—A dual Peer—A dignified Rebuke—Respectable Dulness—The industrious Apprentice—A nice Distinction—Ash Wednesday—The Major—Lord Randolph Churchill on Mr. Selater-Booth.

Feb. 15.—Personal prejudices. A good story has come to town with Colonel Moray, the new member for Perth. During his canvass he called upon an elector and opened a conversation designed to lead to the bestowal of his vote. The colonel dilated upon the great merits of Lord Beaconsfield, and showed how he had saved the country by his patriotic and spirited policy.

"Ay, ay!" said the elector. "Beaconsfield is verra weel, but that fellow Disraeli I couldna bear."

Feb. 21.—The Admiral in the doldrums. The Admiral has never been the same man since the Fleet was ordered to return, after entering the Dardanelles on its first expedition to Constantinople. Long habits of discipline, and a natural tendency to utter "Hear, hear," in stentorian voice, when he observes a movement of the body of any gentleman seated on the bench before him which appears to indicate that one of Her Majesty's Ministers is about to address the House, are not to be finally crushed in a month. Even now, the Admiral half lifted his head and raised his voice, when, somebody on the opposite benches having proposed that Cross should substitute the word "which" for "that," the Home Secretary, on the part of the Government, firmly declined. But it was the mere ghost of a cheer—a sound such as one might expect to hear coming from the look-out man of the *Flying Dutchman*, as he hailed a

passing ship. The Admiral is truly broken in spirit and sad at heart. He has not even sufficient spirit left to fan himself; and his copy of the Orders which in happier days presented after a short debate a ragged and crumpled look, now lies beside him as smooth as when it issued from the printing-press.

He sits, regarding in a sort of half-dream his old aversions of past days. There, nearly opposite, is Parnell, sitting bolt upright, and portentously watchful. A little to his left sits Biggar, who, with spectacles on nose, and a grotesquely wise look on his face, is scanning the Bill before the House apparently in search of the nominative missing from the preamble of his own Voters (Ireland) Bill. Biggar very nearly brought the Admiral round the other night, when he calmly prognosticated that, within a week or two, we should hear of the British Fleet in the Bosphorus having surrendered to the allied Fleets of Russia and Turkey. Biggar has recently added to his personal attractions by investment in a prodigious waistcoat, made of material that bears a more or less close resemblance to sealskin. He has an aggressive way of imposing this garment upon the House which, taken in conjunction with so distasteful a prophecy, was more than an irascible, though retired, sailor could stand. As he stood with his coat thrown back, so that not an inch of the waistcoat might be obscured, and as he pleasantly passed his hands up and down the woolly substance in search of the armholes, in which he might thrust his thumbs the while he pictured a British Salamis, there was a dangerous contraction of the Admiral's mouth, a fierce flashing in his grey eyes, and it seemed for a moment as though Biggar was about to be boarded.

It was, however, but a flash in the pan—flashes which have played forth once or twice to-night when Macdonald has thrust himself into debate, leaving his aspirates behind him. But of this also nothing has come. The Admiral of old is no more, and, if his pulseless heart were examined, there would be found written on it the word, "Dardanelles."

Feb. 22.—A dual Lord Stratheden and Campbell is still smarting
Peer. under the rebuff he received the other night from Lord Derby, and now, standing in the middle of the passage of the gangway for the better convenience of carrying on those gymnastics which accompany articulation, he is slowly gyrating

and bringing up from infinite depths the weighty words with which he is freighted and would affright his hearers. If he were a member of the House of Commons, he would be howled at. If he were not a peer of Great Britain, noble lords who are too frequently addressed by him would be inclined to give expression in a mild form to their disapproval. But his lordship is more than a peer of Great Britain. He is two peers—holding the barony of Stratheden from his mother, and that of Campbell from his father.

Regarded as a politician, the gentleman thus twice-blest may scarcely be credited with average intelligence. Ever since the political crisis commenced he has at brief intervals thrust himself into its nice complications, has attempted to drag the House into inconvenient debate, to draw from Ministers damaging declarations, or to involve them in silence that might be misconstrued. Lord Derby, driven to desperation by fresh outbreaks, plainly told him the other night, that if he insisted upon bringing on discussion he should have all the talking to himself. That was a strong thing to say to a single peer; it was an astounding affront to offer to a dual baron. It has rankled in the noble lord's bosom, lending an added solemnity to his lurch, and making his speech increasingly slow.

Standing in the gangway, with one hand beneath his coat-tail, and his body turning from side to side in a slow, strained manner, that almost suggests the sound of an uncoiled crank, he laboriously utters his protest. He would lead noble lords, but they will not follow. He would instruct them, but they will not listen. He would form a faction which should split up parties; but, though Lord Denman is understood to have offered to enter into a treaty both offensive and defensive against a deluded and contemptuous assembly, his overtures have been scornfully rejected.

So, disgusted alike with Conservatives and Liberals, Whigs and Tories, Lord Stratheden and Campbell has formed a party of his own. Sometimes Stratheden is the leader and Campbell the follower. Sometimes Campbell leads and Stratheden is content to follow. But whichever peer is predominant, the unity of the party is never broken. Stratheden believes that since the days of Pitt there is no man who has a higher, clearer, and more patriotic notion of foreign policy than Campbell. Campbell,

on his part, believes that, as far as home legislation is concerned, whether it regards law or business, sewage or salvation by clergy, there is no man in Great Britain who, for fulness of information, soundness of judgment, and readiness of resource, equals Stratheden. Thus they dwell in rare unity, comforting each other amid the contumely of envious men, and holding sweet converse together when the two front benches conspire to impose silence on the House.

Feb. 24.—A dignified rebuke. Lowther took his seat after re-election consequent on acceptance of the Irish Secretaryship. He had the better of the other Yorkshireman last week. In returning thanks for his election he indulged in some more or less appropriate remarks on the crisis in the East. Continuing for some time on this tack, a voice in the crowd called out,

“But, Jim, what about Ireland?”

“Sir,” said the new Irish Secretary, “I don’t like talking shop.”

Feb. 26.—Respectable dulness. Hubbard, member for the City, irreverently known in private conversation as “Old Mother Hubbard,” is the sort of man who would be invaluable on a board of direction, on the magisterial bench, or in the office of churchwarden. He is advancing in age; for it is nearly thirty-five years since he flashed upon an astonished country that remarkable but now unread pamphlet on the Currency. But he knows how to combine the virility of youth with the stability of old age. He is the sort of elderly gentleman who can wear a breast-pin; and that, though a trivial circumstance, is an incident worthy of serious consideration. He is always dressed in black, which shows to advantage his almost white hair and his bushy white whiskers. He lives in a constant atmosphere of self-satisfaction, which finds partial expression in a certain swinging walk. He always looks as if he had been cutting the coupons of bonds on which interest was yet regularly paid. One feels a sense of security in his company. His respectability is so strong and prevalent that it is reflected upon those who sit around him; and even Beresford Hope, who occasionally enjoys this advantage, looks three degrees less crumpled than on ordinary occasions.

This attribute has so impressed people, that when Disraeli was forming his Administration there were not wanting those who pointed to Hubbard as the coming Chancellor of the Exchequer. Disraeli, it is well known, gave up his association with O'Connell, because he felt there was a certain lack of respectability about the great Tribune; and, knowing the Premier's acuteness, it was thought he might be inclined to temper the more boisterous elements of the Ministry by pitting Hubbard against James Lowther and Cavendish Bentinck. But nothing came of the rumour, and when Parliament assembled Hubbard took up his seat below the gangway, carefully selecting the upper corner seat, as indicating that though he threw in his lot with the looser fish of the Party, it must not be expected that he should do anything that was not highly respectable. From this seat he rises from time to time and addresses the House with great satisfaction to himself and to his son, a budding statesman who represents Buckingham, and rather thinks that the Ministry cannot last long, since it declined the services of so great a financier as his father.

It cannot be said that he is an entrancing speaker. He has one of those weak voices often associated with extreme respectability. He seems to bring his voice in a glass vessel with which he solemnly walks up the floor of the House when he is about to make a speech, and which he deposits with some trouble on the narrow shelf of the bench before him. His voice, thus materialised, assumes the aspect of a pale, weak, indeterminate fluid, and, of course, when it has all gone out of the glass vessel, Hubbard is obliged to bring his speech to a conclusion. Thus members watch with profoundest anxiety the glass as Hubbard from time to time takes in a supply of voice. Their spirits rise in proportion as its contents diminish, and when, after ineffectual attempts to drain out a last drop sufficient to carry him over half-a-dozen sentences, Hubbard fails and sits down, there is even a grateful cry of "Hear, hear." Unfortunately, Hubbard accepts this as a tribute to his eloquence and erudition; and only wished he had brought in another half-gill of voice, so that he might further gratify an appreciative audience.

But, if it cannot be said that he is an effective speaker, he has his uses. He is something to look at—something to show

to members of the American or the French Assembly, when they come into the Speaker's Gallery, and expect to witness the familiar sight of an hon. member with his heels on the desk, or two other members expounding the principles of perfect liberty whilst they shake clenched fists in each other's face. It would be a sad and appreciable blow to the House of Commons if, some day, the City of London were to discover that there is nothing in Hubbard, and to protest that it is not its business to supply the House of Commons with respectability.

Feb. 28.—The industrious apprentice. It was pretty to see James Lowther standing at the table just now moving for leave to bring in a Bill relating to grand juries in Ireland. He was plainly but carefully dressed. It was after dinner, and he had so far yielded to the exigencies of social custom as to appear in a dress coat. But he studiously abjured the white necktie, as savouring of days of sin and nights of cock-crowing. The House welcomed him with a cheer, which token of generous amity caused a blush to suffuse his ingenuous cheek and added a fresh grace to the *négligé* air with which he spread himself out over the ministerial box, and plunged into his subject.

Lowther, as the House could scarcely fail to remember at this critical moment, has always been a great authority on Irish politics. Nine or ten years ago, when Gladstone was carrying through the House elaborate schemes for the reformation of the Irish Church and the reclamation of Irish land, there was no member who took a more lively interest in the proceedings. In those days there was no reason why he should not wear a white necktie; and he very often did, though the article was wont about one o'clock in the morning to present an exceedingly limp appearance, owing to dampness induced by the physical vigour he threw into his statement of arguments against the Bill. Not that there was much variety in the form of the arguments. As far as I remember, they rarely went beyond the cry of "Oh," or a prolonged chant of "'Vide, 'vide, 'vide," sometimes varied by exceedingly able imitations of the vocalisation of the cock, or talented reminiscences of the unsuccessful articulation of the ass. These remarks, in which another of Her Majesty's ministers, the Right Hon. Cavendish Bentinck, generally concurred, were sometimes misunderstood and

misconstrued. At this distance of time, standing apart from all prejudice or party rancour, one can recognise in them the struggling of a great and intelligent mind, desirous of stating its views on questions of Irish policy.

It is doubtless to these early studies of Irish affairs that Lowther owes the easy mastery over matters of local government he displays to-night. To hear him talk of baronial presentment sessions, county at large presentment sessions, and grand juries, it might well be thought that he had spent all his life in Ireland, and had even, like the Major, been a member of a board of guardians.

Some young men of high spirits and idle habits are apt to regard the House of Commons as a convenient club with one large room in which larks may be carried on. If any question comes on in which they are particularly interested, they will devote some measure of attention to it, and will be careful to vote as they are bidden. But for the rest, Bills may come and Bills may go; but they dine out at their clubs, dally over their cigar, and look in at the House of Commons at midnight to see if there is any fun going on. Lowther took a higher view of the duties of a Member of Parliament, and he has had his reward. If, in the session of 1869, any Member had risen and had foretold that, within ten years, Lowther would stand at the table a member of the Privy Council, and Chief Secretary for Ireland, he would have been nominated for the next vacancy in Bedlam. And yet here he is to-night, decently dressed in black, free from the smell of cigars, and charged with the destinies of Ireland.

He not more than anyone else knew in 1869 what the fates had in store for him. But, finding before the House a question of the gravest interest to the Irish nation, he set himself down sedulously to study the question and master the details; and now, when fortune suddenly calls him to the helm, he is found capable of guiding the ship.

Feb. 27.—A nice distinction. Lord Truro has in him the makings of a great orator. Interrupted the other night by precise Lord Redesdale, on the ground that he had not given notice of the question upon which he was showing a disposition to enlarge, he said:

“My lords, my object is not to ask a question, but to inquire

whether Her Majesty's government have had their attention called to this matter?"

Mar. 6. — Ash Wednesday. The House was to have met at two o'clock to-day; but everybody is at church, and the service is so prolonged that it seems as if there would be no sitting at all. On the Opposition side there are a few men who, having cut short their privilege, managed to get down to the House at two o'clock. But for fully twenty minutes the great Conservative party is represented solely by James Lowther, who sits silent and downcast on the Treasury bench. James would fain be at church, where yet linger Cavendish Bentinck, Robert Peel, Puleston, Holker, George Hamilton, Saul Isaac, Chaplin, Henry Lennox, and many others. So complete, and in the highest sense satisfactory, is this strict observance of church duty, that in despair the Speaker gives directions that the Committee-rooms shall be searched and members brought down to make a House. Peter Taylor has not shrunk from suggesting that this postponement for two hours of the meeting of the House on Ash Wednesday, in order that members may attend church, is a farce. I wish he could have been here to-day to note this triumphant refutation of his suspicion! It might be worth Beresford Hope's while to move for a return of all members who attended church to-day. This entered on the Order Book would be a standing answer to the men of Belial.

The Major. One figure there was present from the earliest moment. Seated in the modest obscurity of the far corner Opposition benches, with hat tilted over his thoughtful brow, sat the Major. For some weeks his presence has been lacking to the House of Commons. Urgent duties, not altogether unconnected with the Board of Guardians, have called him home. But he always answers to the trumpet-call of duty, and when the day arrives for moving the second reading of the Municipal Franchise (Ireland) Bill be sure that he is in his place in the hated House of Commons. Owing to the prevalence of religious fervour on the part of members, the circumstances under which the Major presently rose to deliver his speech were most depressing. As soon as a House was made, members returned to the Committee-rooms, and it

was in the presence of less than a score of men that the Major commenced his oration. Some would have taken a base advantage of their opponent, and would have silently moved the resolution, leaving the adversary to speak to empty benches, whilst they reserved their speech for a later period of the afternoon, when the House would be full. But, partly owing to the chivalry of his nature, and principally to the fact that he had carefully prepared his speech, and would only be bothered by the necessity of answering arguments that might be delivered in the course of a debate, the Major plunged straightway into his oration, and got along very well till he directly touched the subject of woman.

Since the earliest chapter of the world's history woman has fatally influenced mankind; and she got the Major into sad trouble this afternoon. He began moderately enough, by bantering the Attorney-General for Ireland upon the prospect of a curtain lecture. As the joke grew upon him the vast form of the Major heaved with a volcanic chuckle, his left eyelid drooped, and if he had been within arm's length of Gibson there is no doubt he would have playfully poked him in the ribs. The prospects of woman in her marital relations naturally led the Major to regard woman as a class, and he diverged into a vindication of the virtue and beauty of the Irish women generally. By steps, easy enough to a mind like his, but altogether bewildering to the House, this led him up to the Emperor of Russia: What the Czar had to do with the Municipal Franchise (Ireland) Bill, or what it had to do with him, is not clear at the first glance. But to the Major it served as a basis of a burst of eloquence, thunderous in its passion, beautiful in its language, and well calculated to bring up the Speaker with a mild but effective rebuke.

"Are we," he inquired, in a loud voice, "living under a Constitutional Government, or are we not?" "One would think," he added, "we were living under the knout—under the sceptre of the perfidious barbarian of the north, the latest filibuster."

The Major has a strong contempt for an assembly that will not permit him to denounce the Czar in connection with a proposal to assimilate the municipal franchise of England and Ireland. But he had evidently made up his mind to control

himself. His fierceness vanished at the sound of the Speaker's voice, and having mopped his forehead with his handkerchief and found his spectacles (which in the excitement of the moment had got on the top of his head) he, through the remainder of his magnificent address to the House, roared them as gently as a sucking dove.

Mar. 7.—*Ld. Randolph Churchill on Mr. Sclater-Booth.* It is nearly a century and a half since Pope wrote that scathing essay on "great Atossa." But some of the lines come back to the memory to-night, when we behold great Atossa's grandson by some removes ruffling the calm surface of Conservatism after a fashion not witnessed since Mr. Disraeli wore ringlets and sat below the gangway. It would not be right to say of Lord Randolph Churchill that, like his great ancestress, he

"Shines in exposing knaves and painting fools;"

though he has not hesitated to describe Her Majesty's Government as deliberately designing a scheme of hoodwinking the people, and has bestowed some pains on the portraiture of Mr. Sclater-Booth. Perhaps Lord Randolph would not object to take to himself a couplet wherein Atossa is described as one

"Who, with herself or others, from her birth,
Finds all her life one warfare upon earth."

He does not often speak. But when he does he says something to attract attention. Only a few months ago, he appeared as the apologist of Obstruction, and was acclaimed in some parts of Ireland as the only sober-minded and judicious member of a Saxon assembly.

His earlier triumphs in the House having been gained by his quaint and sarcastic defence of such corporations as Marlborough when they have been attacked by Sir Charles Dilke, Lord Randolph to-night permits himself the more exquisite pleasure of attacking the Ministry amongst whose defenders he has been counted, and scarifying poor, dull-witted, slow-going Sclater-Booth. He has been accustomed to address the House from the bench immediately behind that on which Ministers sit. It is not without significance that to-night he has taken up a position below the gangway—a providential

circumstance, seeing that the Admiral is in his place. It is fearful to contemplate the agony that gallant gentleman would have suffered, supposing he found himself actually seated on the same bench, or in the same quarter of the House, with a Conservative who more than hinted that the Government was a sham, and that one of Her Majesty's Ministers ranked at something below mediocrity.

It began on the motion to go into Committee on the County Government Bill. Rylands moved its rejection, on the ground that it was another step in the direction of centralisation, against which he had protested when the Prisons Bill was before the House. The motion was seconded by Randolph, who whilst protesting that he "did not want to say anything disagreeable," emphatically declared that he "had ransacked the whole arsenal of denunciatory phrases and had not found any that adequately expressed his estimation—or rather his want of estimation—of the measure." Failing perfect success, he was content to characterise the Bill as "Brummagem stuff," and as being "stuffed with all the little dodges of a President of the Local Government Board when he came to attempt to legislate upon a great question." He could make some excuses for the Cabinet, for their thoughts had been occupied a long time in other and more important directions. Some weeks ago their minds were engrossed with the difficulty of getting their ships into the Dardanelles. Of late they had been considering how they might get the ships out again. Amid this occupation they had consented to allow Selater-Booth to come down to the House and, with all the appearance of a great law-giver, to endeavour to amend in his little way the British Constitution.

The effect of such Ministerial agency was seen in the details of the Bill, which Randolph mercilessly criticised. As for its general conception, he described it as "one of those attempts to conciliate the masses by concessions of principles dear to them, which concessions were immediately minimised by the details of legislation. The Government thought that they were deceiving the people, but the only persons deceived were themselves." In conclusion, turning towards the members near him, he called upon them to rally round him whilst he "raised the last wail of the departing Tory party, and did

his utmost to defeat this most Radical and most democratic measure, this crowning dishonour of Tory principles, this supreme violation of political honesty."

Randolph had brought with him a sheaf of notes, which presently got mixed up in inextricable confusion, and added the charm of adventitious surprise to succeeding passages. His oratorical attitude is not specially graceful. Possessing a considerable collection of sheets of note-paper folded lengthwise, it occurred to him that it would be an advantage, when addressing the House, if he carefully inserted a sheet between each finger. Having both hands full, he waved his arms about somewhat after the fashion of a windmill. In moments of comparative repose his gestures suggest that he is about to perform some conjuring trick, and his confidentially conversational manner of addressing members aids the illusion.

But these eccentricities of manner did not seriously militate against the success of a speech full of clever phrases. What added greatly to the enjoyment of the scene, for everybody not personally concerned, was the contrast between the reckless youth who represents Marlborough and the right hon. gentleman who presides over the affairs of the Local Government Board. Sclater-Booth is a gentleman who acts as a foil to the more daring selections the Premier made when forming his Ministry. He is the sort of man of whom Conservative Ministries used to be constituted in days gone by. A heavy person of pompous appearance, facile of speech, and dowered with two names—"Remarkable," Randolph observed in one of his many asides, "how often we find mediocrity with a double-barrelled name"—he obtained a minor office in the Conservative Government which lived upon sufferance in 1867-8. As he was ex-Minister and a pictorial representative of the bucolic interest, Disraeli, in a weak moment, offered him office again, this time as President of the Local Government Board. In this capacity it has been Sclater-Booth's duty to dine with befitting regularity, to walk into the House when the division-bell rings, and to sit bolt upright on the Treasury Bench when any business relating to local government is stirring. He has no lack of speech. All he wants is ideas. The very embodiment of officialism, the incarnation of prosperous head-clerkism, he lives his life and draws his salary quarterly; and though there is a general impression that he is

something more than "a dull man," it has never occurred to any one to attack him till this rollicking young lord comes down to the House, and amid a tirade of abuse of the Government to which he belongs throws him now and then a morsel of contempt.

"I have," said Randolph, amongst other magnanimous reflections on the portly President, "no objection to the President of the Local Government Board dealing with such questions as the salaries of inspectors of nuisances; but I *do* entertain the strongest possible objection to his coming down here, with all the appearance of a great law-giver, to repair, according to his small ideas and in his little way, breaches in the British Constitution."

This is a word-picture which leaves little to be filled up. It hits off in a few sentences the salient characteristics of Selater-Booth—his pompous appearance and his inadequate ability, his supreme satisfaction with himself and the very different feelings he inspires in others when an accidental impulse converges attention upon him. Whether premeditated or not, whether inspired by any personal feeling or by zeal for the State, it remains equally true that the effect of this onslaught on the pachydermatous President was infinitely more effective by reason of its desultory character. Had Randolph set himself to describe Selater-Booth, as Pope set himself to limn the Duchess Sarah, his endeavour would not have had equal effect. These little darts shot out occasionally, their venom concealed by a careless gesture, went straight home, and smote Selater-Booth, as a man who loved his dinner might be smitten if he found that, by some mischance, the salmon was swimming in the soup, and the ice had tumbled on the roast meat. He sat in his familiar attitude, bolt upright, with head slightly thrown back, one leg crossed over the other, and hands clasped before him. Sometimes a scornful smile passed over his face, and sometimes he made a hasty and angry note. But, on the whole, assisted by bountiful nature, he was enabled to assume composure if he had it not.

When, some hours later, he rose to reply, he observed that the remarks made by Lord Randolph Churchill did not call for any notice—a matter on which, I am afraid, most people will differ from him. Mediocrity in office, more especially if it has

the prefix "Right Hon." and enjoys the assistance of a hyphen in its name, gets along safely enough through quiet times. But it is a dangerous thing when a reckless youth comes by, and, with audacious hands, thrusts pins into the stuffed figure.

CHAPTER XXVII.

RESIGNATION OF LORD DERBY.

An Honour to the Peerage—The Premier's Hat—Mr. Delahunty's Comb and Brush—A "working man's member"—The Attorney-General's Fee—Resignation of Lord Derby—An Indian Debate—Lord Leitrim.

Mar. 19. — An Among members who yesterday heard the chimes honour to the at midnight in company with the Speaker was Peerage. Lord Eslington. The noble lord generally is about when there is any real work to be done. If he had chanced to be born in a humble station in life, and had entered the City of London with the traditional half-crown in his pocket, and not another friend in the world, he would inevitably have risen to be Lord Mayor. Being born the heir-apparent to a peerage, and the son of a man who had won glorious victories at the poll, Lord Eslington naturally took to politics. He has sat for South Northumberland for just over a quarter of a century, and has, I should say, done more useful work as a private Member of Parliament than any man of equal standing in the House. Constitutionally inclined to regard life as a serious thing, he has never trifled with oratorical prettinesses, nor lent himself to anything in the shape of political "marching past." If fireworks were wanted, as on the occasion of the administering of that direful check to Russia—the creation of the Empress of India—Eslington was the wrong man to apply to. But if you want real work done in committee or a practical judgment on a difficult question delivered by a man whom the House of Commons thoroughly esteems and respects, it would be a great thing if you could win the approval of Eslington.

He is no orator. But he can make a plain statement on any

subject with which he is conversant, and he never speaks on any on which he is only partially informed. Never once in the course of twenty-six years has he been known to wander near the confines of a joke when addressing the House of Commons. To him, life is too serious a matter to fritter away in *jeux d'esprits*, and eternity too imminent for mortals to parley with puns. But he has by no means a funereal manner, such as Newdegate wears—Newdegate who, by the way, is a man with the keenest sense of humour, and not only thoroughly enjoys a joke, but even occasionally with his own hand strews a few over the pall of his speech. It must not be supposed that Eslington is morose, or inclined to be a kill-joy. He simply thinks that there is a time for everything; and there is so much real business to be done in the world that there literally is no time for fooling, however wittily or pleasantly.

His manner when addressing the House is indicative of his constitutional habit of mind. He thinks out what he says as he utters it, wrestling with himself the while, and you shall see him as he speaks advancing and retiring, and enforcing with nervous forefinger the points of his argument, and the proofs of his experience. In a speech of half an hour's duration, it is probable that Eslington literally walks a distance of a quarter of a mile. But as the rules of the House prevent progress being made in a straight line, he advances from the bench to the red line on the matting beyond which no one but Plimsoll may stand when addressing the Speaker, and he only on one leg. By long practice, Eslington knows precisely when he has reached this limit, and without looking down to see how far he has trenched on dangerous ground, he will retire and begin again with his forward march.

He has now, however, marched straight out of the House, and will never more return. Yesterday he was the Hon. George Henry Liddell, by courtesy Lord Eslington. To-day he is Earl of Ravensworth, and will carry his good sense, his sound judgment, his kindly disposition, his generous impulses, and his true philanthropy to the House of Lords, where, in truth, an accession of these qualities is much needed. We shall miss him in the House of Commons, and he will, beyond doubt, miss that red line on the matting, which has been to him a source of sustentation and spiritual revival through many Sessions.

If the Earl of Ravensworth is wise, he will commence his attendance in the House of Lords by sitting on a back bench. If he takes his usual seat on the front bench, he will, in the course of the first ten minutes of his speech, inevitably find that, in the absence of the familiar red line, he has walked over to the Liberal benches, where, indeed, he might well permanently take up his place without danger of discovery that he is nominally a Conservative.

The Premier's hat. When Disraeli went to the House of Lords, his earlier moments of gratification at finding himself a peer of the realm were chequered by a little difficulty with his hat. He is a most methodical man, and when in the House of Commons, having completed his saunter down the floor and seated himself on the Treasury bench, the first thing he did was to put his hat under the seat. When he went to the House of Lords and seated himself on the Ministerial bench, he instinctively did the same thing, or rather attempted to do it, and was confounded and perplexed to find that there was no space under the seat. Several nights the Premier was observed diligently pressing his hat against the unyielding frontage, and it was fully a fortnight before he got out of the habit, and acquired the new one of placing his hat on the table, where it rests, one of a dozen which Redesdale meditates upon while Stratheden and Campbell is addressing the House.

Mar. 21.—Mr. Delahunty's comb and brush. We have been playing at Parliament this afternoon, and since the time must be lost there are few to whom the privilege of wasting it might be conceded with greater pleasure than to Delahunty. He is, everybody knows, a great Irish patriot; and, brooding over the woes of his country, he has found the golden elixir which shall renew her life like the eagle's, drain her bogs, cleanse the Liffey, mend the roads, settle the educational question, raze the Castle to the ground, double the allowance of whisky in every family having the full average of ten children, make the rent pay itself, and keep off the everlasting rain.

An earlier patriot (one St. Patrick) had also a panacea for the woes of Ireland. He abolished snakes. Delahunty would abolish one-pound notes. How this charm is to work no one

knows, probably not even Delahunty. But he has an immense array of facts bearing impartially either on this question or some other; and these he brought down this afternoon in a leather bag, which he deposited beside him, together with a glass of unfiltered water, the brown colour of which was a disgrace to the Company that supplied it for domestic use. Standing at the corner of the bench below the gangway, gracefully conceded to him by McLaren, who cannot understand how Delahunty should get so muddled amongst figures, he commenced to explain his scheme, and got along very well until the comb and brush turned up.

It is presumable that Delahunty had promised himself, when his task was completed, a few hours' relaxation in one of those gilded saloons he is in the habit of frequenting. In view of this arrangement he had, after filling his bag up to the top with papers, just found room to put in a comb and brush and a few other articles of his toilet. Starting with a handful of papers taken out of the bag, and finding they did not seem to lead to the desired conclusion, he presently turned round, and, amid an awful silence, dived once more into the bag. Of course the first thing that came to his hand was the comb and brush. He hastily thrust them back among the documents and made another start with his speech. But, the fresh batch of papers also led nowhere in particular, and Delahunty was fain to make up for their indirectness of argument by the use of exceedingly direct assertion. Then he turned to the bag again, fearfully conscious of the presence of the comb and brush. With increased deliberation, and amid a pause prolonged till it almost reached the length of the interval when the Speaker has gone out to tea, he rooted among the contents, and finally, under the impression that he had at last seized the papers he sought, produced a pair of grey worsted stockings. This seemed to approach the question of one-pound notes from another avenue. In despair he turned a third time to the bag, and, alas! the first thing that presented itself on the top was the comb and brush. Growing reckless, he took the things out in full view of the House, and holding them in his left hand, deliberately searched with his right for the papers.

It was at this stage that he enounced the emphatic reference to the cause of Ireland's ills, and invited the House to assist him

in abolishing "thim infernal one-pound notes." This was not Parliamentary. But neither were the comb and brush nor the worsted stockings; and the Speaker, with his customary wise moderation, which knows not only when to reprove disorder, but when to be deaf to a chance expression falling from a good man struggling with adversity, balanced the one argument against the other, and said nothing. The House was equally tolerant, and listened with high good humour to a story that had neither beginning, middle, nor end, and through which the comb and brush came and went as harlequin and columbine purposelessly flit across the stage in the intervals of pantomime business.

Mar. 21. — A "working man's member." There is no surer portent of the near approach of a dissolution than is to be found in the sudden waking up of the member for Stafford. Night after night we see a figure rise from the front bench below the gangway, and hear an aggressive voice utter the formula: "Mr. Speaker, Sir, I begleave to ask the 'Ome Secre'rary wether—" and so on, through some ill-constructed and strangely emphasised sentences. Aspersion ever pursues greatness, and there have not been wanting, among ill-natured local secretaries, remarks to the effect that "Macdonald is getting too uppish." He has acquired a habit of introducing, in casual conversations, references to his friend "Heslington," "Dilke," and "Fawcett." He is known, moreover, to have possessed himself of a suit of evening clothes.

These are matters which to the meditative miner supply food for reflection. He has heard that Burt is a man held in the highest esteem in the House; that he might, if he chose, form intimate personal relationships with its most distinguished men. But he has never heard him mention "Heslington;" and his simple mind shrinks appalled before the attempt to conceive Burt in evening dress. At the beginning of a new Parliament, these doubts and hints might be borne by their object with equanimity. But when events appear to shape themselves so that a dissolution may take place any week, it is desirable to show the miner that, whatever may be the aspirations of Short, Codlin is his friend.

Accordingly we hear of Macdonald going about the country, addressing inflammatory language to honest working men, and

endeavouring to convince them that their employer is their natural enemy. He has even burst forth into verse on this subject, representing, with fine sarcasm, the employers of labour as singing :—

“ We have bought horses at thousands—
Horse-flesh as we like for to own.
Our credit it is painfully wretched,
Let us now give a terrible moan.

“ The workers are a terrible nuisance,
They will not go yet without bread,
These trade-union leaders will spy on us,
With one yell let us pray they were dead.”

In the House of Commons he eschews poetry and abides by the “ ‘Ome Secre’rary.” He uses strong language, such as the men whose ears it is intended to reach can understand. Accidents in mines he calls “murders,” and by implication accuses Cross of being an accessory before the fact. These are plain words, and, being duly reported, together with indications of the reception Macdonald draws down upon himself in the House of Commons, will doubtless have the desired effect among men already heated by the passionate poetry of which a sample is quoted above.

What the miner, or rather what some section of the mining population, think of Macdonald, appears from the following verse which an anonymous “Northumberland miner” recently insisted, at the point of the pick, that his local journal should publish :—

“ Noble Mac, who kindly feels
For those who toil in the mine,
Watchest o’er their wants and weals,
When they in their sorrow pine.

“ Noble hero of thy day,
The poor miner staunchest friend ;
When false charges to him they lay,
His cause nobly dost defend.

“ Let the tyrants in their rage
Thy fair fame try to deface,
Newspaper minions engage
To clothe thy name with disgrace.

“ English miners, ne’er forget
The good he has done for you ;
Before his bright sun is set,
His path with flowers bestrew.”

This is poetry. In sober prose, the miner meditating upon Macdonald's mission in the House of Commons, doubtless pictures to himself an assembly of well-dressed, high-born, affluent gentlemen, who in some indirect manner live by the sweat of his (the miner's) brow. Among them, though set apart from them, is one noble man attired in a threadbare garment scrupulously brushed. With modest air, but with unflinching boldness, the threadbare man rises and addresses the assembly, desiring to say a few words for his distressed and down-trodden co-workers. Then all the men in broadcloth gibe at him, and swear that they will continue to Grind the Miner. The quiet, dignified man in the threadbare dress persists in his noble mission; but is at last overcome by the howling assembly, and is put out of Court by the suborned Chairman, whom subsequently, and in consideration of his complicity, the members liberally supply with mugs of beer, and to whom they promise to give a brindled pup free of dog-tax.

Ah, me! I wish the worthy miner might spend a week in the House and watch his champion. In these days of cheap excursion trains and of organised trips to London, will no one arrange that a delegation of miners may come and occupy the Strangers' Gallery on some night when Macdonald is about to manifest himself? The British Workman has eyes to see and ears to hear, and I will venture to say that the 'Ome Seere'rary and the House of Commons would willingly accept the verdict of twelve intelligent miners on the issue between them and Macdonald.

Mar. 26. — The
Attorney-General's
fee.

A good story, which has the advantage of being true, is going about, and is to the credit of Holker. As the Attorney-General was entering the House on Thursday night he saw a stranger standing in the corridor inquiring after a member. The member in question happened to be a friend of Sir John's, and desirous of obliging him, he said to the stranger—

"Come along, I'll get you in."

The stranger followed, and Sir John passed him into the Speaker's Gallery. As he turned to go away the man held out his hand, and before the Attorney-General quite realised his position he found he was the possessor of sixpence. Sir

John is very proud of the coin, and showed it to his colleagues on the Treasury Bench, affirming that it was the most easily earned sixpence he possessed.

Mar. 28.—Resig-
nation of Lord
Derby.

The House of Lords was by no means full to-night, and if there were either anxiety or expectation on the part of its members the feelings were very successfully hidden. The front Ministerial bench was only partially occupied, the Premier, Richmond, and Salisbury sitting together in the centre. The front Opposition bench was crowded, though there was a notable absence on the part of Granville. The benches behind were certainly not crowded, but they were fuller than on the opposite side. In the galleries there were about a dozen ladies, near a group of whom sat Schouvaloff, the Russian Ambassador, gazing intently upon the gathering assembly. The members of the House of Commons, taking the place by storm, filled every available corner appropriated to their use. At the steps of the throne was the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and near him stood John Manners, whilst the spectacles of Cross, who had rather missed his way in the race, gleamed from the background of the host of Privy Councillors.

Shortly before a quarter-past five Derby entered without attracting any particular notice. It appeared, indeed, that some minutes elapsed before he was observed to be sitting below the gangway, a position which at once, and without spoken word, announced the fact that he had resigned. Carnarvon, it may be mentioned, rose from his usual place to make his statement announcing his resignation, and resumed it at the conclusion of his speech, deferring his removal to other quarters till a later appearance in the House.

As soon as it was generally perceived that Derby had taken his seat below the gangway, a quick movement was discernible among the crowd of Privy Councillors on the steps of the throne, and amongst the other and equally crowded sections of members from the other House. Every man seemed to turn to his companion to communicate the discovery, simultaneously made, that Derby was no longer Foreign Secretary. The noble lord lost no time in confirming this surmise, and there was no circumlocution or introduction in his statement.

"My lords," he said on rising, "I take the earliest opportunity of stating that I have ceased to hold the office of Foreign Secretary."

There was no demonstration amongst the limited and scattered audience to whom this momentous announcement was directly and formally addressed. But in the Strangers' Gallery, where, to the despair of the attendant, everybody was standing up, and straining every nerve to catch the words which fell from the lips of the Foreign Secretary, there arose a curious exclamation, like the drawing of a deep breath after witnessing some perilous incident.

Derby went on to show how, under existing circumstances, it would not be for the public interest that he should avail himself of the right of ex-Ministers to explain at length the causes which had led to his taking this step. The Cabinet had arrived at certain conclusions of a grave and important character, in which he was not able to concur. Those measures he believed would not necessarily or inevitably tend to bring about war; but he could not regard them as necessary for the safety of the country, prudent in the interests of peace, or warranted by the state of affairs abroad. He added that his objections did not arise from difference with his colleagues as to the course to be taken in view of the Congress. Moreover, he gave the fullest credit to the Cabinet for a desire to preserve peace, in which he was at least at one with them.

"We agree as to the end," he said, "but unhappily differ as to the means."

Derby spoke for about ten minutes, and contrary to his usual habitude, closely followed notes. After a brief pause he was succeeded by the Prime Minister, who, as in the case of Derby, was received without any mark of feeling. The Premier commenced by protesting, with great solemnity of manner, his profound grief at the separation from a personal friend, which the resignation of Derby brought about. For a quarter of a century, "an awful period in the life of any man," he had found a friend and colleague in Derby, and it was a terrible wrench to part with him. But he found some gratification in the reflection, that when national interests were involved no public man could be influenced by sentiments of personal esteem or friendship. Derby had acted with great prudence in refraining

from going into particulars as to the causes for the step he had taken. But to prevent the public from investing the step with unnecessary mystery, the Prime Minister thought it proper to state that, in "the hope of rectifying the disturbed balance of power in the Mediterranean," her Majesty's Government had determined to call out the Reserved Forces. With that object a message would be forthwith laid before Parliament, when the House would have an opportunity of considering the policy of the measures and the conduct of the Government.

In the absence of Granville, Cardwell said he would follow the example of Derby and abstain from entering upon debate. Here the subject dropped.

April 2.—An Indian debate. To night India is again the subject of discussion; and behold the House of Commons!

Gathorne Hardy, who has just come up from Windsor after receiving from the hands of the Queen the seals of office as Indian Secretary, feels bound to be in his place throughout the debate. So he sits there with folded arms and wearied look, and promptly acknowledges the influence of the subject by falling sound asleep. On his right hand, very wide awake, is George Hamilton. A recent close personal association with Salisbury has improved the young lord's natural tendency to belief in Carlyle's dictum, that (other) "people are mostly fools," and he listens with evident impatience and ill-concealed contempt to the remarks on India offered by such men as Fawcett, Grant Duff, and George Campbell. George Hamilton is just thirty-three, and from this splendid eminence of youth he looks down with pitying scorn on the fripperies of fifty.

These two gentlemen, one awake and one asleep, represent the measure of interest which Her Majesty's Government take in India. On the bench behind is the Admiral, who, occasionally hearing the word "India," is reminded of hot climates, and forthwith fans himself. At the corner of the same bench is Christopher Beckett Denison, who once held rule in Bengal and the Punjab, and who naturally feels qualified to volunteer his opinion whenever a night is set apart in the House of Commons for the delivery of essays on Indian subjects. Denison is a heavy man, and withal acrimonious. He somehow or other

suggests the appearance of a judge without wig and gown, and addresses the House of Commons as if he were sentencing it to a month's imprisonment and fourteen strokes with the birch rod.

On the seat behind Denison and the Admiral is Smollett, who sits with hands deeply set in his pockets, and hat pressed forward on his forehead. He is evidently disturbed in mind, having doubtless remembered one or two nasty things he might have said about somebody, and which did not occur to him when, just now, he addressed the House from below the gangway. This is not Smollett's usual place. But, like Ritchie, who also sits below the gangway but who has now undisturbed possession of the third bench behind Ministers, Smollett has gone up higher for company's sake, there being not a single member on the wide waste of green-cushioned benches below the gangway. On the opposite side matters are slightly improved in point of attendance. There are, under all circumstances, more intending speakers to be found on the Liberal benches, and as speakers have to wait their turn, it invariably happens that on occasions like this, when the House of Commons is comparatively deserted, there are more men on the Opposition benches than on the Ministerial side.

Two members occupy the front Opposition bench, both Right Honourable. At the end is Lyon Playfair, conning over the speech he wrote out yesterday, and which he will presently recite for the instruction and edification of the House. Next to him is Adam, rare occupant of the bench where, as ex-Minister, he has a prescriptive right to sit. Usually, the influence of Adam's cheerful presence is diffused through the lobby. But the fact is he was in the lobby up to six o'clock this morning, except when he was walking through the division lobbies in the mechanical process of legislation, by grace of which public-houses in Ireland will presently be closed on Sundays. Now he is fast asleep, thus establishing the balance of power between the Ministry and the ex-Ministry, there being one Minister asleep and one awake on the Treasury bench, and one ex-Minister awake and one asleep on the front Opposition bench.

Adam's sleep is destined to be brief. William Dyke enters and stands at the bar a moment looking round the House, calculating the chances of the count-out he will presently

arrange for. As his piercing glance sweeps the empty benches, it lights upon the Opposition Whip, and a gleam of triumph passes over his expressive features. He, too, was up all night, and yet holds sleep at defiance—a singular instance of the vitality of Conservative principles as compared with the effects of disorganised and disarmed Liberalism. Sir William walks down the House, bound for the Treasury bench. But all the while his eyes are fixed on the sleeping form of the Opposition Whip. As he draws nearer, Adam, conscious of a subtle but powerful influence, moves uneasily in his seat. He is dreaming that the Session is over, that the 12th of August is come, and that among the heather-scented moors by Blair Adam he seeks the gamesome grouse. Suddenly, just to the left of him there sounds the well-known “whirr!” and a splendid bird rises. Adam is just bringing his gun up to his shoulder when his hat, which has been at a dangerous angle for some moments, topples to fall, and waking he finds the eyes of Dyke fixed upon him as the Baronet slowly advances towards the Treasury bench.

Adam is fond of sport. But he is an old bird himself, and it is delightful to see how quickly he realises the situation, and how sudden and engrossing becomes his interest in the copy of the “Orders” he had held in his hand as he fell off to sleep. Asleep? Nonsense. He had but closed his eyes as he debated with himself whether there is any use in trying to keep a House after Fawcett’s resolution had been disposed of.

Behind the front Opposition bench is George Balfour nursing his hat, that hat which plays so pathetic a part in his occasional appeal to Ministers. Sir George, like Edmond Fitzmaurice, who sits just behind, is waiting for the opportunity to make a speech. But Lord Edmond acknowledges that in a debate there comes a time when a man who has prepared a speech is wise not to insist upon delivering it. This is a lesson Balfour has never learned; and when an hour or two later George Hamilton has thrown a few sentences at the head of Fawcett, and of other gentlemen who presume to criticise the department for which this young nobleman is (or was) officially responsible, Balfour rises, and amid some murmurs and cries for a division, addresses the Speaker at the rate of three hundred words a minute.

Sir George sometimes attempts to conciliate an impatient

audience by holding his hat in his hand as he speaks, an arrangement designed to convey the impression that it is his intention to make only a very few remarks. To-night he leaves his hat on the seat behind him, and when the speech is finished unwittingly but determinedly sits down upon it, offering it up, as it were, as a sacrifice on the altar of India. Sir George, who is highly susceptible to the jeers of thoughtless members who never were in India, resolutely refuses to acknowledge this little accident, and struggles to get the wreck of the hat out from among his coat-tails without attracting attention. This he finally succeeds in doing, and carrying out his stoical intention of making believe that nothing has happened, he lays the flattened cylinder beside him without looking at it. Presently he furtively draws it to him and straightens it out, the hat, failing to appreciate the situation, returning to its original cylindrical shape with a resonant explosion that awakens Adam, who, having watched Dyke out of the House, is just dropping off to sleep again.

On the bench behind, in addition to Edmond Fitzmaurice, is Massey, who is at this moment addressing the House. Below the gangway, in a corner seat at the top of the bench, is Bazley, who, in a limited audience, is an immense comfort to a speaker, for Sir Thomas always sits attentive and looks as if he were profoundly engrossed in the endeavour to understand and appreciate the arguments addressed to him. As he succeeds in maintaining this impression even when he is asleep, the comfort is perhaps illusory. But that is a matter of detail. Just below him, spread over two and a half seats, is T. B. Potter, pregnant with the fate of Malta, Ceylon, and the Spice Islands of the Irrawady. The bench below this is empty, and the front bench has for sole occupants Robertson, who takes an interest in India as a place for which railway material is often ordered; and Macdonald, who has secured temporary possession of Fawcett's seat in the corner—a situation which he much affects, possibly hoping to take in political economy at the pores, as Joey Ladle imbibed wine.

This is the full tale of members. How many does it make? Just sixteen; seventeen, including the Speaker—seventeen hon. and right hon. members, fifteen awake and two asleep, engaged upon discussion of the vital interests of India at a time when,

we are told, our empire there is imperilled, and would indeed have long since vanished had not Lord Beaconsfield opportunely made Her Majesty Empress. It is true there were more members in the House just now. Fawcett was here, and George Campbell, Grant Duff, MacIver, and Arthur Balfour, were also in their places. But these, having made their speeches, have gone their way, for it is not the least curious and significant thing about an Indian debate, that, gentlemen having got through their own speeches are not under any circumstances to be induced to wait and hear others. Thus as speeches accumulate the audience decays, and if it were not for the fact that presently members, having fortified themselves with dinner, will look in to have their names entered in the division list, a debate on an Indian topic would reach what in connection with Her Majesty's ironclads is called "the vanishing point," and we should find the last man addressing his observations to Mr. Speaker and the Mace.

April 3. — Lord Leitrim. There are a good many stories current about Lord Leitrim, whose cruel murder is the theme of every tongue. Here is one I hear from a former neighbour. Close by Leitrim's house is a small line of railway, leading on to the main Dublin line. One day as a train was about to start the station-master observed, at some distance down the road, a man, dressed like a respectable cattle dealer, who was waving his hat and shouting with the evident intention of stopping the train. But the time was up, and the station-master could not delay. The whistle sounded and the train was moving out of the station when the man on the road called out—

"Lord Leitrim! Lord Leitrim!"

Leitrim was a man of autocratic habits, and accustomed to rule with a rod of iron. At the sound of this dreaded name the station-master at once signalled the train to stop. It returned to the platform to await the arrival of his lordship. Seeing the train stop the man in the road took matters more leisurely, and, finally arrived, walked into the station, opened the door of a second-class carriage, and got in.

"Where is Lord Leitrim?" said the station-master, peering down the road.

"Sure I don't know," said the man, wiping his forehead.

Presently it dawned upon the station-master that the name of the terrible landlord had been used as a lure, and the train went off with the ingenious cattle dealer.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CALLING OUT THE RESERVES.

Mr. Newdegate addresses a Speech to himself—Calling out the Reserves—In the Lords—In the Commons—"A gang of smashers"—Mr. Bourke's Disappointment—Mr. Goschen on his Legs—Mr. Gladstone mobbed in the House of Commons—Mr. Monk—Farewell!—Sir Charles Adderley, Lord Beaconsfield's Joke—Sir Charles Adderley retorts on Mr. Plimsoll—Mr. Gladstone's broken Windows—A strange Story—A Panacea for the Eastern Question.

April 5. — Mr. Newdegate addresses a speech to himself. Newdegate to-night inadvertently introduced some merriment into a discussion which had not been lively by unaccountably commencing a speech with the address,
 "Mr. Newdegate, sir."

April 8. — Calling out the Reserves. In the conflicting interest of a great night in both Houses of Parliament, the Lords to-day undoubtedly bore the palm. At half-past four the House of Commons was less full than usual. But the seats were gradually occupied, and when, at about five o'clock, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, amid cheers from the Conservatives, rose to move the Address in reply to the Message from the Crown calling out the Reserves, the House presented a crowded appearance. Nevertheless, a large contingent of members had gone over to the House of Lords, attracted by the prospect of a speech from the Prime Minister. They filled the galleries and the spaces by the bar, and such as were Privy Councillors congregated in a dense mass at the foot of the throne. At five o'clock Richmond was the only occupant of the Ministerial bench, being faced on the Opposition bench by Argyll. Five minutes later the Premier entered with a light step, bestowing unwonted smiles as he passed through the crowd, swinging in his right hand a small red despatch box.

The House now quickly filled up, amongst the peers who entered being the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge, who sat together on the cross bench. Derby entered just before a quarter-past five, and seated himself at the corner of the bench below the gangway, whence he addressed the House on the memorable night his resignation was announced. It is a long time since the House of Lords was so crowded by peers. But perhaps the most remarkable feature in the assemblage was the overflowing attendance of ladies. With the exception of a few gaps on the more strictly reserved seats to the left of the woolsack, appropriated to the use of the diplomatic body, the ladies thronged the galleries, filling up the gangways, and standing in crowds in open doorways. The galleries over the throne entrances were also crowded; and amid the gilt turrets of the canopy over the throne itself glimpses were caught of half a dozen ladies dressed in deep mourning.

In the Lords. Punctually at a quarter-past five the Prime Minister rose, and was received by a slight cheer from lords behind him. He commenced, in a slow, deliberate tone, what proved to be an elaborate and scarcely informing review of papers which have for some time been in the hands of Parliament and the public. His object in this review was to establish the assertion that throughout the negotiations Her Majesty's Government, whilst most anxious to go into a Congress, as offering the best means of securing peace, had consistently and persistently demanded that the whole of the articles of the treaty between Russia and Turkey should be submitted.

"That," said Beaconsfield, "has been the diapason of our diplomacy."

Coming down to the date of the Treaty of San Stefano, which, he observed, had been signed on the 3rd of March, and communicated to Her Majesty's Government only on the 23rd, it was a negation—he would not say a violation—of the treaties of 1856 and 1871. Completed in secrecy, encircled in mystery, when it came into the light of day it was found that it abrogated and abolished Turkey in Europe, substituting for the power of the Porte the possession and the administration of Russia. Nor was it different in Asia, the treaty working with the result of

making the Black Sea almost as completely a Russian lake as is the Caspian Sea. Beaconsfield read at length the last correspondence between the English Government and Russia, in which the demand for the submission of the whole of the articles of the treaty was repeated. Russia's refusal destroyed all hopes of a Congress, and not being able to secure peace and justice by the aid of treaties and the weight of public opinion, the Government had to consider what was their duty.

"In the East," said the Prime Minister, solemnly, "there is but one step between collapse and convulsion."

It was impossible to say what might not happen. Why should not the Russian army march through Asia and "throw Egypt and the Suez Canal into a state of trepidation?" When all the world was armed was England to be disarmed? The Government had thought not, and the result was the calling out of the Reserves. But Beaconsfield was anxious to explain that this was not the last, but the first, resource of England, in a state of emergency.

"You could not," he said, "put a corps d'armée in the field without calling upon the Reserves."

In a short time we should have an army of 70,000 men fairly disciplined. It was double the force that Marlborough or Wellington ever commanded. But it was not the full measure of the strength of the Empire. That Empire, he informed the blushing peers, had been established by their ancestors. No Caesar or Charlemagne ever ruled over such an Empire. Its flag floats on every water. Its subjects people every zone. It is no mean heritage. But it is not only to be enjoyed; it is to be maintained, and it can be maintained only by the display of the qualities which had established it, the qualities of courage, discipline, determination, and patience.

"In the East of Europe you will find," he continued, sinking his voice to its deepest and most solemn bass, "some of the interests of the Empire are imperilled."

Raising both voice and arms aloft he protested in peroration that he could not believe that in such a time there would be any Englishman found to dissent from the unanimity with which the Address he now had the honour of moving should be passed.

Beaconsfield sat down after a speech of about an hour and a quarter's duration. Loud cheers followed upon his impassioned

peroration, some ladies in the galleries opposite clapping their hands, whilst the Strangers' Gallery was shaken with subdued but prolonged applause. Granville followed, stating at the outset that he did not intend to move an amendment, and proceeded to criticise in detail some of the steps which had led the Government into their present critical position.

In the Commons. Meanwhile, in the other House, the personal rôles had been reversed as far as the two first speakers were concerned. Stafford Northcote had acquitted himself of the task of moving the Address in a manner so quiet and a tone so pacific as to offer a strong contrast with the magniloquent and occasionally defiant language and bearing of the Prime Minister. On the other hand, whilst Granville was almost mincing in his criticisms, Gladstone, in a speech which occupied nearly two hours in the delivery, set forth an eloquent and impassioned denunciation of the policy of the Government, a policy which began and ended by leaving them in ill-starred isolation. Even now, he said amid loud cheers from the Opposition benches, instead of going to the other Powers and inviting their concurrence in representations to Russia, the Government had elected to open direct negotiations with that Power, neglecting a proposition from Germany for a preliminary Conference. The worse the Treaty of San Stefano the more the need of a Congress. Where there was a broad and long and straight path the Government had chosen to conduct the nation along the brink of a precipice.

"If," he cried, amid renewed cheering—"if the Government will so far humble themselves as to work with Europe, and not without Europe or against Europe, my belief is that they will receive the support of a united people; they will earn the gratitude of a nation never slow to yield it, and they will escape the immeasurable guilt of a causeless war."

Amid the loud cheers which followed the conclusion of Gladstone's address, the House temporarily broke up, leaving Wilfrid Lawson to move his amendment in the presence of about a score of members. This number was presently still further reduced, Walter Barttelot speaking to an audience of twelve members, including himself.

But whilst the debate at this hour drooped in the Commons, the interest in the Lords was even increased by the participation

in the debate of the late Foreign Secretary. Derby followed Granville and his criticisms of the policy of the Government. Propounding these two questions—What are we going to fight about? and what allies shall we have?—he, with respect to the first, arrived at the conclusion that there was no practical provocation to war; and with respect to the latter, he declared that England would find herself without allies. Germany would maintain an attitude of neutrality that would not be benevolent towards Great Britain. France is not inclined to repeat the Crimean war. "Italy is complete, and Italy is content;" and for Austria to declare war against Russia would be an exceedingly bold policy, as the result of an adverse campaign would be to break up her Empire.

The Lord Chancellor followed, and was succeeded by Selborne, Carnarvon, and Salisbury, who gave remarkably unqualified expression to the feeling of Ministerial vexation at the speech of Derby. After some words from Kimberley, the Address was agreed to, and the House adjourned.

In the Commons, Gathorne Hardy, rising shortly after eleven o'clock, delivered an animated speech, directed chiefly against Gladstone, every hit at whom was enthusiastically cheered from the Conservative benches. Hardy spoke till the half-hour after midnight had struck, and, it being manifestly impossible to conclude the debate, it was by common consent adjourned.

April 2.—"A gang of smashers." Since the night when Plimsoll stood on one leg in the House of Commons and shook his fist at the Prime Minister, everybody knows that the member for Derby is not endowed with abnormal faculties of reverence for authority. But few suspect him of a sarcastic vein; and yet he said a bitter thing to-night. Some members were remarking on the difference in the tone of Beaconsfield in the House of Lords, and of Stafford Northcote in the Commons, on moving the Address calling out the Reserves—the one so warlike and the other so pacific.

"No," said Plimsoll, "there is nothing so strange about Stafford Northcote's amiable way of putting things. A gang of smashers always have among them one simple, ingenuous young man whose manner and appearance enable him to pass their bad coin."

April 11. — Mr.
Bourke's disap-
pointment.

Not only has Bourke not been elected Common Serjeant of the City of London, but the office has been conferred upon Charley! Bourke had, not without good reason, looked forward with certainty to his serving his country in this fresh and elevated sphere. To be Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in her Majesty's Government is an honour; to be Common Serjeant of the City of London is a glory. Moreover, he has long acquired a profound distaste for foreign affairs. He is sick to death of the Treaty of Kinardji, and the Convention of Kulchekarichow is a weariness to him. With an equable mind like Derby's at the head of the Department life would be endurable, only for its questions. But to have Salisbury over one in the morning, and in the evening to have members from all sides of the House popping up and putting inconvenient questions, is more than can be borne.

There never was, Bourke thinks, such an assembly for wanting to know as the House of Commons. They are always discovering that something has gone wrong somewhere; that some canal, with a long name which Bourke cannot find upon the map, has been dammed in the dead of night by an irascible Russian general; or that the Turks have been toasting a Christian in a village with fourteen consonants. And then of late there are the Greeks, who *will* be continually "rising."

At the outset, and whilst he was in one of the earliest phases of distraction, Bourke hit upon the odd expedient of hanging out his pocket-handkerchief till it held on to his breast-pocket by the hem. This was generally understood to represent a flag of truce. But it was all in vain. The flag was openly fired upon, and after it had further complicated matters by several times falling to the floor, and been picked up by John Manners, Bourke gave up this simple and ingenious device. Now, there is nothing between him and his questioners but the table, and as Wolff occasionally fires at him from below the gangway on the Ministerial side, and as frightfully inconvenient questions are sometimes put from benches behind him, the table is practically of little use.

This morning Bourke left his bed with the conviction that before the sun went down he would be in a position to bid

farewell to the Treaty of Kinardji, and would be able to observe the continued rising of the Greeks with the imperturbability proper to the Common Serjeant of so important a community as the City of London. To-night his hopes are crushed, his castle in the air is levelled with the ground, and here, *pour comble de malheur*, is a member wanting to know whether it is true that British troops have been landed on the island of Tenedos!

April 12. — Mr.
Goschen on his
legs.

What a splendid prospect there is before Goschen, if, preparatory to making a speech, he could only be induced to wash his hands at home, to abandon his hat to the temporary charge of the table, and to induce the backs of his legs to forego the satisfaction of contact with the edge of the bench. Hartington cannot always lead the Liberal party in the House of Commons, and when he is translated to another place, there must needs be a vacancy. The question as to who shall fill it is one which doubtless many right hon. and even hon. members have settled to their own satisfaction. But to the unimpassioned and unprejudiced onlooker there is not so much absence of uncertainty in the problem. Lowe is, of course, impossible, though he is a man to whom the mind turns with most longing. Forster is "found out." Childers would make a useful head-clerk, but might never be trusted with supreme direction. And—and—that is all.

These be your leaders, O Israel! and from such choice as is supplied, and putting out of the question any dark horses that may be stabled below the gangway, Goschen is the only possible successor to Hartington. But what can be done with a man who, whilst he is addressing the House of Commons, *will* wash his hands with invisible soap in imperceptible water; or, failing this, *will* nervously hold his hat in front of him as if he were about to make an omelette in it; and who, in either case, *will* hold on to the edge of the seat by the calves of his legs?

"What can you expect from people who wear their slippers down at the heels?" Lord Palmerston long ago asked with respect to our friends the Turks.

What can you expect from a gentleman who thus uncomfortably disposes of himself in view of the House of Commons?

April 13. — Mr. Gladstone mobbed in the House of Commons. If any historical painter would occupy himself with placing on canvas a scene in the life of one of the most illustrious British statesmen, here is a subject :—

Scene, division lobby of the House of Commons; date, 12th April, 1878; time, 9.20 p.m. Gladstone is walking along the lobby, having recorded his vote against a hasty proposal to conduct the business of Parliament in secret. The Conservative majority in the other lobby observe him through the glass door, and suddenly set up a yell of execration which could scarcely be more violent if the murderer of Lord Leitrim, flying for sanctuary to Westminster, were discovered skulking in the lobby. The crowd increases till it reaches the proportions of forty or fifty English gentlemen, all well educated, many of good birth, who, with hand held to mouth to make the sound shriller, howl and groan, whilst some even shake their fists. Gladstone, startled at the cry, looks up and sees the crowd. He pauses a moment, and then, advancing close up to the glass door, calmly surveys the yelling mob.

On the one side the slight figure drawn to its full height, and the pale, stern face steadfastly turned towards the crowd. On the other the jeering, mocking, gesticulating mob. Between them the glass door, and the infinite space that separates a statesman from a partisan.

April 15. — Mr. Monk. The House is discussing the vital interest of the dog-tax, was ten minutes ago absorbed in consideration of the national importance of an addition of fourpence a pound on the tobacco duty, and has no thought of the momentous event which is being quietly consummated. Andrew Lusk is "wanting to know" every ten minutes, and is received with cries of contumely by Conservative gentlemen who cannot understand how a man can tamely subject himself to the domination of so vulgar a passion as curiosity. Monk, with an added precision in his tone and an additional pinch of starch in his manner, is delivering a few remarks about young hounds, which J. G. Talbot listens to with a reverential air. Talbot, indeed, always does listen to Monk with a peculiar manner that suggests a consciousness of being at church. This is not to be wondered at. Early family associations, and

sedulous cultivation of natural gifts, have succeeded in enveloping Monk with a manner which irresistibly recalls the pulpit. He delivers a few remarks on the dog-tax as if he were reading the First Lesson of the Morning Service, and when he has addressed a brief speech to the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, involving a criticism on the estimate for the wages of the officials who light the fires at the public offices, members involuntarily turn to their copy of the Orders, half expecting to find printed in italics, "In quires and places where they sing, here followeth the anthem."

Monk is, indeed, a bishop or a dean gone astray. There is an aggressive primness about him which would have been invaluable either in a small country parish, a cathedral town, or on the Episcopal Bench. Having missed his way, however, and finding his path lead him from the church porch, he sometimes assumes an air of boisterous gaiety which fits him as a shooting-jacket might become a dean who has still retained the reverend breeches and the soul-subduing stockings of his Order. Monk likes to hear the chimes at midnight, in company with such roisterers as Dillwyn and Rylands. By that time good Sir Thomas Bazley has gone home, and Monk has slipped into the corner seat, the possession of which is the mad ambition of an otherwise equable life.

Being here, enlivened by the sight of Rylands two benches below him, Dillwyn watchful on the corner seat of the front bench below the gangway, and Knatchbull-Hugessen, in the absence of Forster, treating himself to the impression that he is leader of the Opposition, he grows quite jovial. His "Yaw! yaw!" resounds at brief intervals throughout the House, indicating ironical appreciation or hearty approval, after which he turns himself in his seat and laughs audibly. Monk laughs, as he does everything else, in a decorous manner. He measures his cachinnations out by the drachm as it were, and though you may listen attentively you will never find evidence of overweight. Even in his wildest and most abandoned moments, when, in the unbounded gaiety of his spirits, he has gone so far beyond his usual habit as to say, "Yaw! yaw! YAW!" you shall never see a hair displaced in his carefully arranged coiffure. How he gets his hat off without disturbing his hair is ever a mystery to Forster.

For a few weeks in the year Monk suddenly bursts on the horizon of a startled House, attired in a suit of dust-white clothes. Everything is of precisely the same shade—hat, hair, coat, and trousers. On these occasions the decorous joviality of manner occasionally noted in Committee of Supply at midnight is intensified. There is a policeman outside—or there was, for he has since been dismissed—who declares that one day last summer when Monk first assumed this familiar suit, he heard him, as he walked along, whistle a snatch from a secular tune. That, however, is obviously one of those manifestations of disordered imagination which are sometimes detected in policemen in the witness-box. But it is certain that Monk assumes with his memorable suit an added jauntiness of manner which, in view of the common supposition among the casual population of the street that he is a bishop in mufti, might lead to scandal.

Farewell! Sir Members, occupied with the engrossing topics
Chas. Adderley. of the evening, do not observe Sir Charles Adderley as he walks restlessly about with long strides and downcast face. Sometimes he enters from behind the Speaker's chair, and sits for a few minutes on the Treasury bench. He gazes sadly round the House, taking in every feature of the familiar aspect. After a few moments he rises and walks out into the lobby, where he speaks with softened voice to the attendants, and almost tearfully entreats the postmaster to supply him with a penny stamp. As King Henry was never known to smile after the English Channel had engulfed his son, so Adderley has never been known to laugh since a factious Opposition wrecked the Merchant Shipping Bill. He deeply felt the humiliation of that terrible session. But whilst there was life there was hope, and he always looked forward to the opportunity of retrieving his official character. It is all over now. The sardonically friendly hand of Beaconsfield has handed him the cup of hemlock in which the patent of a peerage is hidden. He will drink, and die, and be buried in the House of Lords.

This is a melancholy ending of a life full of conscientious, if not always successful, labour. For nearly half a century Adderley has been a member of the House of Commons. He knew

Beaconsfield when he was Mr. Disraeli, and wore ringlets. He sat on the same bench with Gladstone when the ex-Liberal Premier was a Tory and championed the union of Church and State. He knew Palmerston when he was a disregarded and undervalued Under-Secretary. He was a contemporary of the old, old man at Pembroke Lodge, when he was Lord John Russell and the fate of Empires brooded under his disproportionate hat. He knew Bright when he was regarded in the House of Commons as an evil cross between Tom Payne and Cobbett—a man who, it was true, believed in God, but who openly doubted the divine right of landlords. He took his seat for North Staffordshire whilst Stafford Northcote was at Oxford being coached for his M.A. Gathorne Hardy had been only twelve months called to the Bar when Sir Charles entered Parliament; and as for Hartington, he had just been promoted to jacket and trousers, and his ambition was bounded by the possibility of making a peg-top spin.

And now Sir Charles is spending his last hours in the place where so many memories are enshrined. When pleasant-faced Mr. Hartley, the doorkeeper, to-night cries "Who goes home?" and Adderley joins the departing throng, it will be with the consciousness that he may never more enter the House of Commons. At most he shall sit in the gallery over the clock, and gaze down upon the busy throng, compared with which the place whither a too-officious friendliness has banished him is as a mill-pond to the sea. These must needs be saddening thoughts, even to the most hardened politician. But Sir Charles is not hardened, and has never been a politician. He is known in the House as a kindly, warm-hearted, high-minded, straightforward gentleman, of the type which Englishmen are, perhaps without authority, too prone to regard as peculiar to their own country. A consciousness of this personal character tempered the sometimes angry criticism on the Merchant Shipping Bill, and members were always unaffectedly anxious to discriminate between their distrust of the measure and their high appreciation of the man.

It is easy to gather from Sir Charles's troubled brow, from the softened tone in which he speaks to passing acquaintances, and from the longing glance with which he looks around the House on this his last night in it, that he will ever bear with

him affectionate remembrances of the place in which are entombed the aspirations of his youth, and in which he has conscientiously accomplished the work of a long and laborious life. It is also pleasant to know that the House of Commons will always think kindly of Charles Adderley.

April 16. — Lord Beaconsfield's joke. Lord Beaconsfield's mind being now exclusively turned upon military matters, there has occurred to him a new and happy name for his old adversary, Lowe. He alludes to him in private conversation as "The White-head Torpedo.*"

April 17. — Sir Chas. Adderley retorts on Mr. Plimsoll. The Admiral also has a joke, and certain reverberations from various parts of the House which alarmed strangers in the gallery on Monday and Tuesday were simply the Admiral's undimmed enjoyment at each repetition of its recital to his many friends. It seems (according to the Admiral) that one day last week Plimsoll met Adderley, and said in his most friendly way—

"I hear, Sir Charles, you are going to another place."

"Yes," said the future peer, "I am going to a place where 'the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.'"

April 23. — Mr. Gladstone's broken windows. The other day a street mob broke Gladstone's windows to the tune of "We don't want to fight." The papers having stated that the damage to his windows had been assessed at £3 10s., Gladstone to-day received a badly written letter from a working man, enclosing the exact sum. The writer said that he and his family had felt so ashamed of the great statesman's windows having been broken by any calling themselves working-men, that they had scraped together the sum to pay for the damage.

May 3.—A strange story. To-night comes news that Sir Francis Goldsmid has been killed in a railway accident at Waterloo station. This sad and sudden death removes from the House of Commons a man who was esteemed in proportion as he was more closely known. Of gentle disposition and unassuming manners,

* At this time "the Whitehead Torpedo" was the theme of daily discussion in Parliament and the press.

he shrank from active participation in politics, leaving the family name to be distinguished in this particular walk by his nephew and heir, Julian Goldsmid, the member for Rochester. Sir Francis very rarely troubled the House with a speech—the average as between two members of one family being made up also in this direction by his nephew. But he was a constant attendant, and his slight, shrunken figure, his grey hair, and his gentle, kindly face, were among the most familiar features on the benches behind that on which the leaders of the Opposition sit.

I hear a weird story in connection with the private history of the family of which the late baronet was the head. It is a tradition in the family, and generally with the Jews settled in England, that for nearly a hundred years a fatal spell has overhung the Goldsmids; and facts show that, in a manner doubtless due to coincidence, but nevertheless remarkable, the spell has not failed to work throughout several generations. During the latter part of the eighteenth century (so is the story told to me) there lived in London a Jewish rabbi, alleged to be gifted with those magical powers many instances of which are to be found recorded in the Old Testament. This seer was known as the Rabbi de Falk. When he died he left to Aaron Goldsmid, great-grandfather of the late baronet, Sir Francis, a sealed packet, with strict injunctions that it should be carefully preserved, but never opened. By way of enforcing this request, he informed the old Dutch merchant who founded the Goldsmid family in England that if his injunctions were obeyed he and his descendants would bask in the sun of prosperity till the coming of the Messiah. If his instructions were disregarded, ill-fortune would finally overtake each successive representative of the race.

Old Aaron Goldsmid kept the packet, holding it sacred for some years; but, finally, in an evil moment, curiosity overcame his reverence for the dead kabbalist, and he opened the packet. A few hours after he was found dead. On the floor near him were the contents of the packet, which proved to be a small piece of parchment covered with hieroglyphics and kabbalistic figures.

At the time of his death, Aaron Goldsmid had founded a great fortune and a prosperous family. Amongst the latter he divided his wealth. Two of his sons—Benjamin and Abraham

—entered upon business as money brokers, and speedily established a colossal connection. They were omnipotent on the Stock Exchange, were popular in the country; and Benjamin enjoyed the personal friendship of the Heaven-born Minister who flouted the great Napoleon. Like all his family, Benjamin was a man of boundless generosity and judicious philanthropy. He founded a naval college, and was never tired of exercising private liberality. But as he advanced in life he began to feel the curse of the kabbalist. He grew despondent, scented ruin from afar, and, on the 15th of April, 1808, being fifty-five years of age—rich, honoured, powerful, and esteemed—he died by his own hand.

Brother Abraham was now left to represent and guide the fortunes of the Goldsmid family. For five years he managed with accustomed success the great business of Goldsmid Brothers. In the year 1810 he joined the house of Baring in contracting for a Ministerial loan of fourteen millions. The bears came down on the fold of the loan contractors, and succeeded in depreciating the scrip. These were circumstances which came in the usual way of business, and would, a few years earlier, have been met with the skill, firmness, and infinite resource which had already lifted Abraham to the front rank of financiers. But the curse of the kabbalist was upon him. He shrank from an encounter with adverse circumstances. He hesitated, blundered, and, always losing, presently sank into a fit of despondency from which it was impossible to arouse him. A sum of half a million had to be forthcoming on the 28th September, 1810. In the state of the market Abraham Goldsmid did not know where to put his hand on the money. He shrank from the impending disgrace, and when the hour struck at which the cash was due, it was discovered that Abraham Goldsmid had paid another and still more terrible debt, for he was dead.

After this the Goldsmids fell from their high estate in the City; but not for long. A greater than Aaron or Benjamin arose in the person of Isaac, a nephew of Benjamin, and grandson of the founder of the English house. Isaac entering into business in the City speedily amassed a fortune, and became known as one of the greatest financiers in the world. Having made his own fortune, he maintained the family reputation for aiding in good works, and became largely engaged in phil-

anthropic and educational undertakings. He was a friend of Mrs. Fry's, and was one of the principal founders of University College, London. At sixty years of age he retired from business, having heaped up enormous wealth and secured the honour of an English baronetcy and a Portuguese peerage. He seems, among other good things, to have at least staved off the curse of the defunct De Falk, and though he sank into childishness during the last years of his life, that is a calamity which poor humanity is subject to when it sees fourscore.

But with the next heir the curse showed itself with added malignity. The late baronet, Sir Francis, was the son of Sir Isaac, and the news runs like wildfire through the town to-night that he is a mangled corpse.

May 6.—A panacea for the Eastern Question.

Captain Stacpoole's general notion about the present crisis is that if Lord Palmerston would only have stretched a little further the ordinary term of longevity and remained in power at the present day, affairs on the Continent would have been differently arranged. In fact, with this notion the gallant Captain's views of the Eastern Question begin and end.

"Well," he says, "what do you think of things to-day?"

Then you state what you think of things to-day; and the Captain, with the profoundest look, whispers in your ear—

"Ah! things would not be as they are if old Pam were alive, eh?"

"No," you think, "they would not."

How old Pam would arrange them, or how Stacpoole thinks he would have arranged them, are matters no one dreams of inquiring into. It is enough to know that "if old Pam were alive, things would be different;" and the oftener the Captain delivers this dictum—and he will whisper it in your ear five times a day, if you chance to meet him so often—the more clear it becomes that he has put his finger on the blot, and has, as it were, settled the Eastern Question.

And this is the man whom an aristocratic Government neglects, and of whom a slumbering country knows too little! Through many long and anxious months negotiations on the Eastern Question have been in progress; a great war has taken place; a Treaty has been broken; a Treaty has been signed; a

new map has been drawn and coloured, and hung in the library of the House of Commons; diplomatists have bargained and bartered, have resigned, have withdrawn their resignations, and have tendered them yet again. The funds have risen and fallen; fortunes have been made and lost. All the world has been in a state of whirl and excitement, not knowing what would come next, and not always thoroughly informed as to what had happened last. And here, blushing almost unseen, wasting his wisdom on the lobby air, is a man who, with a keen eye, sees into the heart of the business, and, with a single phrase, describes its bearings, and suggests the remedy.

"If old Pam were here!" the Captain whispers, with looks of unfathomable profundity.

Perhaps if he were, the Clare Militia would be placed on a war footing. Stacpoole would gird on the sword he hung up at Ballyalla on that memorable July day in 1865, and the lines of Boulair would be forthwith occupied by a regiment that never turned its back on man, or woman either.

So let us be thankful that "old Pam" is *not* here, for we could ill spare from the House the familiar figure which stands about, with hands carefully thrust into trousers pockets so that the little finger of each is displayed, and with hat well set back on the head so as to show to the full the honest, kindly face of a true Irish gentleman, who has many friends, and who never thinks anything a trouble if he can only serve them.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MR. FORSTER AS LORD CHATHAM.

Sir Wilfrid Lawson added to Mme. Tussaud's Collection—Mr. Newdegate at Bay—Metamorphosis of Mr. Parnell—Mr. Sclater-Booth's Salary in Danger—The new Common Serjeant—"Shorts" and "Stalks"—Traducing Obstructionists—Strangers in the House—The indigestible Fly—Mr. Newdegate rouses the Admiral—Mr. Forster as Lord Chatham.

May 8.—Sir Wilfrid Lawson has received the last and crowning mark of public esteem and British popularity. He has just been added to the collection of Madame Tussaud.

Lowther says the "figger" was originally designed for "James Dunphy, commonly known as the Spofforth Sponge," a gentleman who illumined the early years of the century with a singular grace and power of dram-drinking. The story probably arose from observation of the broken bottle which stands on the pedestal at Sir Wilfrid's foot. But the broken bottle is plainly an allegory, and illustrates the poetical side of Madame Tussaud's artists in wax.

May 9.—Mr. Newdegate, rising in Committee of Supply at half-past twelve, and offering some remarks not to the taste of the Ministerialists, was interrupted by cries for a division. Turning towards the direction whence the noise came, he said—

"I must remind my hon. friends that it is twenty-five years since I filled the office of one who helps to make a House, to keep a House, and to cheer the Minister—when he is wrong. That comprehends a long experience, and I claim the right now to speak on a matter of procedure."

After this he was allowed to proceed to the conclusion of his remarks comparatively undisturbed.

May 10.—Metamorphosis of Mr. Parnell. Some consternation was created in the lobby by the appearance to-night of a strange gentleman, who demanded admittance—who, in fact, claimed it by the simple process of walking straight in. There seemed

something familiar about his figure and his walk, but his face was wholly unknown to the watchful attendants, and he was on the point of being expelled, when a too-familiar voice explained all. It was Parnell, who appears to have occupied the Easter recess in carefully shaving himself from chin to crown. The metamorphosis is singularly effective; and if he had been content to remain silent he might have sat in the House a week without being recognised.

May 13. — Mr. Parnell has taken up the great Calf-Lymph question, and O'Donnell, passing with easy grace from the condition of India and the local affairs of Central Africa, is discoursing upon vaccination with a mastery of detail and a clearness of perception that would make Bob Sawyer blush. With a deprecatory wave of the hand, and an amiable convulsion of the right eyelid as he feels the eyeglass slipping out, he apologises for not having known that "this subject was coming up." If he had, he said, he would have provided himself with the precise figures. A long, low sigh of satisfaction marked this period. O'Donnell had already been discussing lymph for half an hour without either facts or figures, and the House felt that the supplement was unnecessary. As for Parnell, his intimate acquaintance with lymph, and with the whole process of vaccination, is simply appalling.

Slater-Booth, who, during his tenure of office at the Local Government Board, had acquired the general notion that lymph was the name for the bandage put round the arm after vaccination, listened with silent wonder. He has, indeed, a special interest in the debate, for the resolution before the House is nothing less than an amiable proposal by Parnell that the vote should be reduced by the amount of his salary. Like Randolph Churchill, Parnell is not satisfied with the President of the Local Government Board. Particularly in this case of vaccination he falls short of the requirements of the hon. member, who is inclined to hold him responsible for the quality of the calf-lymph used compulsorily upon every individual child in the United Kingdom. A picture of himself going about examining samples of calf-lymph, investigating the condition of infants of tender years—

probably even holding them in his arms—presents itself to Selater-Booth's not too vivid imagination as he sits by the Chancellor of the Exchequer a monument of misery.

If there was one thing under heaven it might be supposed the Obstructionists would omit to seize upon, it surely was calf-lymph. But even if they had stumbled upon the commodity, why should they drag into the controversy the person of the President? There is no knowing where the pertinacity of these fellows may end, or what Devil's luck may not attend them in the division lobby. It is evident that Parnell means to go to a division. It is a dangerous hour, nine o'clock not having yet struck, and the defenders of vested interests being as yet engaged on the supplementary dinner estimates. Selater-Booth looks uneasily round, mentally counting the numbers in the pending division. The Admiral coughs reassuringly, intimating that there shall be at least one who will vote "No" to the monstrous proposition. Where is Dyke? and where Rowland Winn? Heaven knows. But they are certainly not in sight, and if Selater-Booth were to go out and look them up Parnell might take that opportunity of forcing the division, and a reformed House of Commons, its principles undermined by the Ballot Act, might cut off his salary.

It was a terrible moment. Beads of perspiration stood upon his brow like contraband lymph. The vaccination mark on his right arm, done in far-off days, before Parnell was known at Westminster, throbbed with a strange anguish. He was painfully conscious that a little to the right of him was Randolph Churchill in the highest possible spirits. Gazing furtively across the floor of the House, he took in at a glance the tall, lean figure of Parnell, with his shaven face, which showed no marks of relenting; Biggar, with his arm gracefully thrown over the back of his seat, smiling largely; and on the seat behind, O'Donnell, intently figuring out something on his copy of the Orders, doubtless some design to bring out the actuarial value of "£2,000 a-year, being the salary of the President of the Local Government Board," now in the fifth year of his office.

How long it would have lasted no one can say. But, oddly enough, in some imperceptible manner, the discussion drifted

aside. A fresh quarry was scented by the keen nostrils of the Obstructionists, and, to his inexpressible relief, Sclater-Booth found that the House was talking of something apart from calf-lymph, and had even forgotten that the issue before it was to "reduce the vote by £2,000, the salary of the President of the Local Government Board."

May 14. — The "Does an alderman thirst for blood?" It is
New Common Serjeant. Hardcastle who puts this conundrum to a startled House. H., who had his legislative birth with the present Parliament, does not speak often. But there was much in his address to-night, apart from this alarming riddle, which recommends him to favourable attention. I do not know in what school of oratory he studied in view of his appearance in the House. It must, I fancy, have been at the Polytechnic, or in some kindred institution, where able gentlemen nightly give imitations of hustings and after-dinner oratory. It is impossible to reproduce in writing the exact manner of his oratory. It is ready in its flow, the words being pumped to pauses and hammered out in emphases with the pleasant regularity of the motion of a piston. Moreover, Hardcastle permits himself slight oscillations of the body, and certain well-regulated upliftings of the face, to mark the effect of his speech on his audience, which are exceedingly interesting, and, like every other movement connected with the speech, have their times and seasons. It must not be supposed that he does not speak well; indeed, his speech to-night was a capital one, and enlivened a debate over which Henry James had cast the pall of his funereal eloquence. The manner, too, has a flavour of antiquity about it that pleasantly suggests the port of '34, and the Madeira that voyaged to and from the East Indies or ever the Suez Canal was made.

The occasion which led to Hardcastle's eloquence was in itself interesting. Henry James, who is always prosecuting somebody, had been indicting the Corporation of the City of London forasmuch as they had elected Charley to the office of Common Serjeant. Not that Charley's name was mentioned by the ex-Attorney-General, or that he did not effusively disclaim any intention of calling in question the judicial capacity of that distinguished man. But everybody realised, not least vividly

Charley himself, that he was the culprit, and that Henry James was, as it were, leaning across the sacred body of the Lord Mayor to stab at him.

Charley is a man who loves his kind, and cannot exist without sympathy. Thus at brief intervals during the statement of the case for the prosecution he has been wandering about the House, chiefly under the galleries, where a number of Common Councillors were seated, listening to Henry James and wondering what they should have for dinner. It is curious how indissolubly the liberties of the City of London are bound up with dinner. In the course of a session the Sheriffs occasionally come down to present a petition, on the acceptance of which rest the inalienable rights of the Corporation. On these occasions they always dine luxuriously, putting to shame the humble cut from the joint which ordinary members of Parliament permit themselves. Even on occasions of less note, when there is before the House a Bill or a Motion more or less directly affecting the Corporation, certain familiar faces are sure to be seen under the gallery, and an unusual bustle is apparent in the kitchen of the House dining-room.

At the time Hardcastle speaks dinner is over, and the gentlemen of the Common Council are enabled to concentrate their attention upon his remarks undisturbed, save by the soothing pleasure of retrospect. Charley bears that comparatively beaming and hopeful look which a prisoner at the bar always presents immediately after the speech of his own counsel. Charley, to be precise, has no counsel, and has heard no speech in answer to the insinuations personal to himself indulged in by members opposite. But he has dined in the soothing company of the Common Councillors, and now here is Hardcastle, if not exactly defending his appointment, even while admitting that the power of election by the Corporation is an anomaly, at least varying the torrent of ill-disguised contempt with which the new Common Serjeant has been overwhelmed. He is in such good spirits that he laughs loudly at Hardcastle's conundrum.

"Ha! ha!" he says, "'does an alderman thirst for blood?' good;" and he looks to the right, under the gallery, where the aldermen are sitting, hoping to catch their approving smiles.

But his countenance falls and his face resumes its former

serious look when he discovers that the aldermen are not "taking" this as a joke. They are not sure that it is not personal. What does the member for East Lancashire mean when he talks of "blood?" Does he mean gravy? and does he intend any covert reference to an individual's preference for the juice emanating from a well-cooked saddle of mutton? Charley, noting this, is not sure that he should not rise to order. But, on reflection, he thinks that perhaps it would be in better taste for him to take no prominent part in a discussion which so nearly affects himself. Accordingly, having sat throughout the whole of a debate from which Thomas Chambers studiously absented himself, he merely voted against the motion, and thus stamped with his high approval the action of a Corporation which had elected him to the Common Serjeanty.

May 16.—"Shorts" and "stalks." There is no subject that may, by accident or arrangement, be brought up in the House of Commons upon which there is not found some member who is thoroughly acquainted with all that bears upon it. From the making of door-mats to the construction of an ironclad, from the precise value of Dr. Schliemann's discoveries at Mycenæ to the domestic arrangements of a hive of bees, the House of Commons is ready, at a moment's notice, to discuss topics as they arise. Some members may even be counted upon to display upon the subject-matter an amount of intimate knowledge which, if it succeeds in emptying the House of the frivolous, is exceedingly valuable to the clerks at the table, whose natural rest is much curtailed in these exciting times, and who know the advantage of scientific discussion regarded as a soporific.

Among members who occasionally distinguish themselves by their superhuman acquaintance with the by-lanes of science or art is Captain Ritchie. The gallant Captain is a model member for a business constituency. Gentlemen like Rylands are too large-minded to attend to any interest relating to a space of geographical area less than that of Asia, or at least of Africa. Ritchie, on the contrary, is of opinion that Asia is big enough to look after itself, whereas the Tower Hamlets require constant attendance. The Tower Hamlets are, indeed, for him, the hub of the universe. He cherishes a secret belief that astronomy is based upon a fundamental error, and that expeditions in search

of the North Pole will continue to meet with the ill-fortune they deserve so long as Governments and individuals will persist in the foolish expenditure of fitting out expeditions to sail through Arctic seas, whereas in the neighbourhood of the Bank they might find a 'bus which would land them at the Tower Hamlets in less than twenty minutes.

To-night he has been urging the claims of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood of the Bethnal Green Museum to have more frequent access to the institution. He gained a concession in the desired direction, as he deserved to do. But he is still smarting under the lack of consideration he met with the other night at the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he brought on the Cigar Question. That was a great occasion. Ritchie came down to the House almost bursting with facts relating to the manufacture of cigars. It seems that his constituents make the fragrant Havanna, and Ritchie wanted some deference paid to their interests in the Budget arrangements. He undertook to demonstrate to the House the injustice of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's plans. But as he was working at high pressure, and poured forth volumes of figures in a voice too rapid for the ordinary sense to follow, nobody but the Chancellor of the Exchequer (who said he understood it all) was much wiser when he sat down.

This freedom from the necessity of forming an opinion on the main question left the House at liberty to admire the marvellous amount of information he had acquired as to the internal arrangements of the familiar cigar. There are "stalks," for example. It is really astonishing to find how much stalks are worth; and Ritchie did not hesitate to lay to the charge of the placid Chancellor of the Exchequer the accusation that "the element of stalks did not enter into his head." Nobody knows why it should. But, from the intense earnestness with which Ritchie made the declaration, and the guilty look of Stafford Northcote, as his hands crept up his coat-sleeve, it plainly appeared that there must be too much truth in the assertion.

Then there was "moisture." A great deal depends upon moisture. But, after all, stalks were the great thing; and, amid much that was only dimly comprehended, it seemed quite clear that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in drawing up his

Budget, and in considering the tax upon cigars, had made a base attempt to ride off upon stalks. Ritchie was too much for him, being enabled to quote the prices-current of stalks since the time of Sir Walter Raleigh.

"In 1867," he said, "the right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich took stalks in at 2s. 4d. Why had the Chancellor of the Exchequer not done so?"

Ah! why? Then there were "shorts." What did the Chancellor of the Exchequer mean by trifling with shorts? What shorts were, Ritchie did not attempt to explain, evidently being impressed with the conviction that their natural history and ultimate destiny must be familiar to every intelligent man. Of course, nobody could get up and admit that he was not closely acquainted with the characteristics of shorts; that stalks were not as familiar to him as the story of Gladstone's iniquities; and that he was not fully cognisant of the modifying influences of moisture. Just as Macdonald always laughs, and lustily cries "Hear, hear!" when a member introduces an apt Latin quotation in his speech, so the House looked intelligently interested. But nobody attempted to interpose in the discussion, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer suspiciously shirked the chief points in the brief reply he ventured to make.

Thus the glory of the debate rested exclusively with Ritchie; and, after the division, there was a great demand in the coffee-room for "shorts" and "stalks," members having gathered that these were a new brand of cigars, highly recommended by the member for the Tower Hamlets.

May 15. — Tra-
ducing Obstruc-
tionists.

Just before nine o'clock, Parnell, having got into an altercation with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, attempted to solve the difficulty by moving to report progress. A long discussion arose on this, during which Thomas Cave, who had been an attentive but silent listener to the wrangle, rose, and with some warmth referred to Parnell and "his fellow-conspirators in an undertaking to obstruct the business of the House." A hubbub arose at the sound of the word "conspirators," in the midst of which Nolan's voice was heard calling out that "confederate was a Parliamentary word as applied to the Obstructionists." Cave at once adopted the suggestion, and substituted the word

"confederates," used by Gathorne Hardy without reproof from the Speaker during the debate on the War Estimates.

Cave, proceeding afresh, was a few seconds later brought up by Parnell for stating that he had come there with the deliberate intention of obstructing business. Parnell called upon the Chairman to rule this out of order. Raikes observed that, after what had taken place under his own observation in the Committee, he did not feel obliged to rule Cave out of order for the remark challenged. Cave accordingly started again, but had not gone far before a reference to "impertinence" brought up the Chairman to order. Cave observed that he regretted he could not use the strongest words in the English language to express his feeling with reference to the conduct of Parnell and his confederates, which, he said, tended to bring humiliation upon the House.

"He has," Cave continued, "been a curse to this House and this country ever since——"

Hereupon half a dozen members jumped up, and Nolan being selected (or rather, at once beginning a speech without submitting to the process of selection), protested against the use of this word, and entered into a disquisition on the numbers of the constituency of Barnstaple, the borough which Cave represents.

The Chairman blandly observed that he was "not able to see what connection the number of Mr. Cave's constituents had with the question before the Committee, which was that he should report progress, and ask leave to sit again."

Nolan said he would drop the subject, and was proceeding in a confidential tone to inform the Committee that he had been absent for half an hour, "having, in fact, gone to dinner," when A. M. Sullivan suddenly sprang up to order. It was not, however, Nolan whom Sullivan desired to bring under the notice of the Chairman, but an anonymous member opposite, who, according to the testimony of the member for Louth, had, when Nolan observed he had been to dinner, audibly remarked, "He looks like it." The Chairman protested against this continual reference to overheard observations, and the conversation returned to the channel of the motion to report progress, which was subsequently negatived.

This outbreak on the part of the member for Barnstaple had all the charm of a surprise. Cave is a gentleman for whose

name we search vainly in the Parliamentary reports. He is understood to be a busy man, whose name stands high in the City. But he manages to spend a considerable time in the House of Commons, sitting there patient, watchful, and thoughtful, when other English members have fled at the uprising of Parnell or Biggar. Everybody was astounded when he rose to-night. He seemed himself surprised to find himself on his feet, and still more astonished to find himself speaking. At the outset his words came slowly and with an effort. But their slowness of enunciation, the total absence of excitement on the part of the speaker, and this sudden discovery of Mount Vesuvius under what had hitherto been regarded as an inoffensive mound, quite took the House aback. When it became clear that Cave was really running tilt at the Obstructionists, and was putting into plain speech the scarcely disguised thoughts concerning them current in the House, a scene of excitement followed on the interval of stupor, and all the Obstructionists were on their feet at the same moment, clamouring for his blood.

It is really astonishing how susceptible Parnell and his confederates are when anything, in language however bland, is uttered to their discredit. Nightly throughout a session we have these gentlemen outraging order, insulting authority, and bringing charges of the most violent character against individuals. But if, as happened to-night, some long-suffering man rises, and turns upon them the artillery of plain speech, they flush with indignation, tremble with horror, and instantly appeal to that authority which at other times they studiously ignore and consistently outrage. If the House of Commons, as a body, had only the courage and the straightforwardness of Cave, a national scandal, daily growing, would be permanently put down before the Whitsuntide recess.

May 16.—Strangers in the House.

A record of the adventures of "strangers" in the House of Commons would make an interesting volume. It is difficult for an outsider to grasp the fact of the full sacredness of the portals of the House, and to comprehend the paralysis which attacks everybody when those portals are even momentarily crossed by an unauthorised person. And yet it is so easy for accidents to happen. There is a well-

authenticated instance of a stranger actually voting in a division, having strayed into the lobby when the House was clear. Three sessions ago two gentlemen, fresh from the genial company to be met with at the Licensed Victuallers' Annual Dinner, walked straight into the House and took up their seats a little to the right of the Serjeant-at-Arms, within three feet of the seat consecrated to Wilfrid Lawson. They sat there for nearly half an hour before they were recognised, although the House at the time was half-empty.

To-night a "stranger" distinguished his class in a new direction. He had secured the privilege of a seat under the gallery on the floor of the House, where he remained for some time listening with great attention to George Campbell's speech on the importation of Indian troops. He heard this very well, but being slightly deaf he had some difficulty in gathering all the words of wisdom distilled from the lips of Harcourt, who followed. Without hesitation he solved the difficulty by crossing over on to the bench before him. He was now actually within the sacred precincts of the House, though he had not done anything more dreadful than occupy the seat assigned to new members waiting to be sworn. Here he might have remained for a long time, for there were several new members whose arrival was expected, and few could say he was not one of them. But when the Chancellor of the Exchequer followed Harcourt, and was evidently making an important speech, the agonised constituent, after vainly endeavouring to hear all that the right hon. baronet said, crossed over to the next bench, and comfortably seated himself in the House of Commons itself!

Here, with hand to ear, and a highly gratified expression suffusing his face, he sat listening to the debate. But his joy was short-lived. His attitude attracted the attention of a member on the Conservative benches, who, appealing to the Serjeant-at-Arms for information as to his identity, brought about the *dénouement*. The intruder thought Captain Gosset, when he approached, was about to invite him to take a seat a little nearer the Speaker, and was quite astonished when he was politely but sternly and promptly walked out of the House, his exit being made through the division lobby, in order to avoid the sensation that would otherwise have followed.

May 17.—The indigestible fly. Charles Lewis's connection with Ireland has been a long and useful one. But his ignorance of the habits of the natives appears singularly well developed. To-night, during a discussion in Committee of Supply, he expressed the hope that something or other "would not prove another fly in the ointment to spoil the digestion of hon. members opposite."

As O'Shaughnessy remarked, Irish members have many peculiarities; but as a rule they do not eat ointment.

May 21. — Mr. "No!"

Newdegate rouses the Admiral. It is all very well for the Admiral to purse up his lips, play with a folded copy of the Orders, and generally infuse into his countenance an expression of vacancy. There is no mistaking the sound of that strident voice. A few minutes ago he was lying broadside-on to the corner-seat just above him, whence Newdegate was speaking, and was discharging a continuous volley of heavily shotted "Noes!" Then the Speaker interfered, and at the warning cry of "Order!" the Admiral put up the helm and came round, running in his guns, closing up the portholes, and trying to look as much as possible like a peaceful merchantman. But he could not stand it long, and presently there rolled through the House a sharp, short cry, immediately followed, when it seemed it might be done with impunity, by a perfect volley of "No!-No!-No!" The Speaker turned his mild yet firm visage fully upon the Admiral, and instantly the guns were run in, the portholes closed, and the Admiral again assumed a look of stolid indifference.

The Admiral reverences all constituted authority, and, in truth, it is because constituted authority is just now being brow-beaten that he has been moved to this demonstration; so he keeps his weather eye fixed on the Speaker, and when that right hon. gentleman drops his glasses, or turns his head, the cry of "No!-No!" once more resounds through the House. The Speaker quickly looks up. There is the Admiral, with his left arm thrown over the back of the bench, his copy of the Orders folded up to look as nearly as possible like a rope's end, and his lips pursed up in the propulsion of a soft whistle. It could not be he that cried "No!" and though he stops short of the

brazen iniquity of meeting the Speaker's reproachful glance, he does not hesitate to throw into his attitude, and to import into his countenance, a look of indifference and languor totally incompatible with active hostility towards anybody, much less his friend Newdegate, to whose speech some one has supplied this disorderly chorus.

Newdegate takes no notice of the Admiral, but holds on his steady and solemn course, as an East Indiaman in full sail might disregard the animated belligerency of a Fiji Islander's canoe. The ground in his neighbourhood is cleared for action. Since C. S. Read had had driven deep over his nose the new white hat with a black band, assumed in honour of his resignation of office, nobody ventures to sit in the seat just below Newdegate when he is addressing the House, more particularly when the topic is a constitutional one. Newdegate wants a good deal of space to talk in, for his gestures are as free as his voice is flexible. An intensely earnest and conscientious man, he loses himself in his subject, and is so profoundly engrossed in it that he only imperfectly regards other things. Thus, if his eye catches a glimpse of the top of a hat just underneath him, he hastily arrives at the conclusion that it is a table, and he has a habit of bringing down full upon it a clenched fist; which of course surprises the member beneath.

To-night he is safely embarked on the wide waters of constitutional law. Drawn up to his full height, with his head slightly held back, and his arms prone at his side, he commences his homily in tones—

“Sad-voiced as the turtle
That Anacreon used to feed.”

Presently, without a moment's notice, he uplifts both voice and arm, and thunders forth denunciation or denial. Then his voice sinks to the depths of a low, hollow whisper; till Selater-Booth, who is sleeping after his dinner, starts up with the fearful idea that Guy Fawkes is down in the cellar beneath, and is giving orders about those barrels. Anon, with scornful gesture, he throws down his notes, and through clenched teeth gives inadequate voice to measureless contempt.

The House laughs at Newdegate. But it is a very different sort of laughter from that with which it sometimes overwhelms

Macdonald, for example. It has known him for a generation, and reserves for him that unalterable esteem and personal liking which genuine merit never fails to receive. Newdegate is hopelessly obstinate. You may as well attempt to take Westminster Bridge under your arm and walk off with it as move him from his settled purpose. Sometimes, as to-night, he sears the souls of good Ministerialists by presuming to call in question the policy of Ministers. His apprehensions with regard to the ultimate designs of the Pope are occasionally inconsequential. His manner is lugubrious, and his speeches might be shorter. But be sure that when he speaks, on whatever subject (always barring the Pope), you shall hear words which convey the impression that the speaker is a man incapable of being moved by mean motives, that all his impulses are generous, and that he rides as straight to the truth as he does to the hounds.

Good old sea-going Tories, like the Admiral, howl at him when he ventures to differ from gentlemen on the Treasury bench. But in the main the Conservatives are proud of him, and would not have him altered in the slightest shade. He is a standing answer to the taunt that Tories move in platoons, and vote according to the regimental order of the day. He relieves the party from absolute monotony, and, above all, does no substantial harm. On the other side of the House, defection such as he displayed to-night might be dangerous. Amongst ill-bred Liberals there are always a few handfuls of loose powder lying about, which a spark may explode. The Conservative party is built on the principle of water-tight compartments. The ship may be staved in at a particular plank, and the water may rush in, threatening wreck and ruin. But it does not get beyond the limit of that particular compartment, and the vessel is easily kept afloat till the damage may be put right.

Thus, Newdegate may saw the air with indignant gesture, and may tell unpleasant truths in a voice that sometimes soars to the height of the Clock Tower and now sinks to the depths of the uttermost cellars. The division will take place on Thursday, and the majority for the Government will be not one unit less than if W. H. Smith had listened to the Admiral's suggestion, that he should tow Newdegate down to the Nore, and show him the place where, in the good old days, mutineers were hanged.

May 23. — Mr. Perhaps never since Lord Chatham entered the
Forster as House of Lords, supported by crutches—it was
Lord Chatham. just a hundred years ago, on the 7th of April—has
such a sensation been created as was effected by Forster's return
to the House that has too long mourned his absence. The effect
was profound, so far as it had range. The pity of it is, that the
range was narrow. Somehow or other, things had not turned out
as they should have done. That Forster was coming down to the
House on crutches had been widely advertised. Even the hour
was named, and everybody knew that when nine o'clock tolled
from the high tower of St. Stephen's, the great Minister would
enter. Possibly because they were not certain of commanding
their feelings, perhaps because Synan had shouted them clear off
the premises, or, peradventure, because Marten had been jumping
up and down all night in the vain attempt to catch the Speaker's
eye—an endeavour in which he might succeed about nine o'clock
—very few members were present.

Forster entered from behind the Speaker's chair, resting
heavily on a remarkable pair of crutches, something like those
seen in cheap prints commemorating "The Soldier's Return."
He walked heavily past the table, and instinctively flung himself
on the seat of the Leader of the Opposition, where Hartington,
coming in later, found him, and humbly sought a seat much
lower down. Strangers in the gallery were agreeably interested
by the spectacle. Mr. Boffin, making the acquaintance of Mr.
Silas Wegg, and discovering that he could read the ballads he
sold, was filled with admiration of him as being "a literary man
with a wooden leg." Thus the strangers in the gallery were in
a pleased state of delight at the spectacle of an ex-Vice-
President of the Council *with* two wooden crutches.

A thrill went through the thirteen gentlemen who remained
in the House, and the murmur of a cheer passed soothingly
through Forster's hair. Synan was inclined to make the most of
his opportunities, and not having been in the House of late years,
he determined to have a prolonged shout whilst he was there.
Forster did not mind this, as the House was so bare. Nobody
cares to play before empty benches. Then Robert Montagu pre-
sented himself, and Forster gracefully gave him place. There were
now only nine members. When Lord Robert had made an end
of speaking, Forster felt that the time had come, and he slowly

rose, amid a murmur of sympathy. Stafford Northcote, one of the most unaffectedly kind-hearted men who ever mistook his vocation, suggested that he should remain seated. But he declined the proffered courtesy. Lord Chatham had always stood as long as he could, and he was supported on crutches when he made that famous declaration in the debate on the expulsion from the House of Commons of Mr. Wilkes.

"A breach is made in the Constitution!" the old man cried; "the battlements are dismantled; the citadel is open to the first invader; the walls totter; the place is no longer tenable. What then remains for us, but to stand foremost in the breach, to repair it or to perish in it?"

These memorable and apposite words were in Forster's mind, and he thought that even though he might excel Lord Chatham in eloquence and in some of the higher gifts of statesmanship, he could not afford to give him the advantage of having stood superior to physical weakness. So he advanced into the breach in an upright position, and began a speech which everybody understood was not to extend beyond a quarter of an hour. Indeed, how could a man on crutches speak for more than a quarter of an hour?

For one in so serious a plight, Forster opened with great vigour. At the end of a quarter of an hour it was evident he was only beginning. His shoulders shook with all their accustomed energy. He turned about with suspicious agility, and as the fifteen minutes were prolonged into half an hour, and as half an hour deepened into three-quarters, a horrible doubt seized men's minds. Was Forster's appearance what the Attorney-General would call a "masquerade?" Should we presently see him shoulder his formidable supporter, fling his big cloth boot at the head of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and drive her Majesty's Ministers before him with his crutch, as Lord Chatham had contemptuously suggested a Minister of the day should drive the revolted Americans?

A great fear now fell upon the augmented assembly. It was difficult to suspect that a man of Quaker parentage would practise upon the House a device like this. And yet——! Forty minutes are passed, and the sound of Forster's voice is almost lost amid the buzz of conversation. It is evident that, with or without crutches, the House of Commons cannot be induced to

listen to him for more than twenty minutes at a stretch. Perceiving this, though not till it had been forced upon his attention for fully a quarter of an hour, he at length brought his remarks to a conclusion, and, to the disappointment of the strangers in the gallery, instead of falling back into the arms of Harcourt, and being carried out by Henry James and Lyon Playfair, he jauntily reseated himself, as if the crutches were a delusion and the leg-rest a snare.

CHAPTER XXX.

MR. ROEBUCK REPULSED.

The great Disturber—The Roebuck-Dillwyn Dispute—Death in the House—Vicarious Bravery—Lord Randolph Churchill and Lord Charles Beresford—A modest Member—The Derby Day—Mr. Chaplin's new Coat—Mr. Rylands on Foreign Policy—Mr. Edward Jenkins.

May 27. — The “Oh! how dreadful!” cried an old lady, reared great disturber. in an atmosphere of Conservative clericalism, when, the other day, Gladstone was pointed out to her at the funeral of a distinguished friend. “*I do trust he isn't come to make a disturbance.*”

This is the story going the rounds to-night, and much appreciated on both sides. It fairly enough illustrates the feeling with which Gladstone is just now regarded by a large portion of the outside public.

May 29. — The Dillwyn sits in the corner-seat below the gangway, none daring to make him afraid. He has, Roebuck - Dillwyn dispute. in his time, fought a good many battles with tyrannical assumption. But though this little tiff with Roebuck has been of a small and personal character, it has required a good deal of moral courage to carry it through. It is a hard thing to appear to outrage any of those wholesome maxims which regulate the lives of good Englishmen. One of these is to reverence old age, and to be gentle towards physical infirmity. Roebuck claims the fullest extension of these considerations, for

he was born when the century was two years old ; and of late years Time has pressed heavily upon him. As the bent figure of the old man slowly advances up the floor of the House, there is an instinctive inclination on the part of every one who is sitting to rise and offer him a seat. No one under sixty can remain comfortably in his place and see Roebuck standing.

John Arthur, who throughout a long career has suffered many aspersions, but has never been accused of neglect in advancing his own interests, has made the most of this condition of affairs. There are at least five hundred seats on the floor of the House. But Roebuck has fancied the corner one below the gangway on the Opposition side. It is a favourite seat, on which Macdonald has looked with longing eye, and from which Sir Joseph M'Kenna, when opportunity offers, is not unwilling to address the House. But Dillwyn has established with respect to it such claim as is admitted in these matters ; and his familiar figure may be seen there at those dead watches of the night when soap is being voted for the use of the bloated charwoman at the Board of Trade, and when provision is sought to be made for the lordly clerks at the F. O. to revel in illimitable pen-nibs.

Roebuck's insubstantial claim to this seat has been politely and courteously acknowledged by Dillwyn. He has come in when he pleased, and has turned Dillwyn adrift, not only appropriating the one seat, but discommoding members to the left by insisting upon laying his stick longitudinally on the bench. This claim also has been submitted to with more or less grace, and Roebuck and his stick have appropriated the better part of three seats. But, as Andrew Lusk once confidentially informed the House of Commons, the down-trodden worm will turn at last, and the other day Dillwyn sturdily put his foot down and declined any longer to suffer personal inconvenience in order that Roebuck might find a position whence he could with greater ease and increased effect abuse the company into which he had thrust himself. The little incident has created a good deal of attention, and hands have been held up in horror at the spectacle of " the outrage upon the veteran."

Supposing this corner-seat were the only one in the House, there might be something in this, and the comparative juvenility of Dillwyn might stand abashed before the infirmity of the elder whom he had condemned to stand. But that is not the case.

There are plenty of seats in other parts of the House, not excepting the Conservative benches, where it would seem gentlemen of the political views of Roebuck would feel more at home.

As to the assumption that, in refusing to vacate his seat at the peremptory bidding of Roebuck, Dillwyn has done dishonour to a man whose political reputation and personal career command respect and esteem, that is more than may be passed over in silence. Roebuck has lived before the world for nearly half a century, and his public life has not been lacking in consistency. But if it comes to talk about honour and usefulness, it suggests the inquiry whether the wasp is an honourable and useful factor in daily life? Roebuck has been a political and Parliamentary wasp, and I never heard of the bees insisting upon doing honour to this member of the hymenopterous family.

When one is seriously asked to do honour to Roebuck, he would like to know on what particular ground honour is claimed. Is it by reason of his wrangles in the House of Commons on behalf of crushed Canada, for which he drew an adequate salary as English agent for the Dominion? Is it because of his eloquent, if acrimonious, advocacy of those great apostles of Liberty, the Hapsburgs, an advocacy which, by a singular coincidence, was followed by a lucrative concession of railway monopoly within the Austrian dominions? Is it on account of his efforts on behalf of the extension of public works in Ireland, in furtherance of which he was intimately connected with that other pure patriot, the late Charles Orrell Lever?

These are, as far as I know, the only actions of Roebuck's political life which go outside the range of a natural impulse to make himself disagreeable. Under this latter head comes his motion for the Sebastopol Committee, a procedure which, it is interesting to remember in connection with his patriotic denunciation of Hartington last week, he undertook at a time, not when the country was on the verge of war, but when the Ministry were actually engaged in a gigantic struggle with a foreign power. His action on that occasion has become historical, because of the magnitude of the interests with which it dealt. But it was merely an incident in a long course of irresponsible aspersion. Thirty-two years ago Roebuck sat in the House as member for Bath, and had the good or ill-fortune to have his portrait painted by a master and a sympathetic hand.

"I know," said Disraeli, speaking in 1846 in a debate in which Roebuck figured in a style even then familiar—"I know how true it is that a tree must produce its fruit, that a crab-tree will bring forth crab-apples, and that a man of meagre or acid mind, who writes a pamphlet or makes a speech, must make a meagre and acid pamphlet or a poor and sour speech. But for the member for Bath! for him—extraordinary purist as he is!—to come forward and complain, as if he had never been in the habit of imputing improper motives to gentlemen! Sir, I am in the recollection of the House when I state that the hon. gentleman by no means represents himself faithfully or consistently, and I think that he, though now assuming the function of general instructor, as formerly of general accuser, would do well to profit by his own precepts, and eschew his melodramatic malignity and his Sadler's Wells sort of sarcasm. Sir, it is very easy to put on this sort of air, wagging the finger, bating the breath, and looking daggers though using none. This is all extremely fine, and if it comes from one who is justified in using such language and having recourse to such gestures, I might say it was simply ridiculous. Coming, however, from the quarter whence it does, it is more than ridiculous—it is offensive."

Disraeli was always happy in his appreciation and delineation of character, and the measure he took of Roebuck in 1846 has fitted him ever since. He has been all round the political compass—a Radical, a Liberal, a Conservative, a Tory; always a wasp.

Profiting by the wisdom which sometimes comes with experience, Roebuck has of late hit upon an easy but effective means of gaining increased personal importance and barbing afresh his sting. If he took his proper place in the House, and made Tory speeches from Tory benches, they would have just such success as their intrinsic merit justified. But to sit on the Opposition benches, and bitterly revile the members of the Opposition, gives a zest to speech which, though the trick has grown stale, seems never to fail. Horsman of late years lived upon the reputation to be derived from this device, and other members of less natural ability—Bowyer, for example—have tried it with varying success. It is, however, an essentially dishonest procedure, and though bringing temporary gleams of triumph,

invariably garners up a harvest of contempt. Obviously there are occasions when a man of independent mind may find himself at variance with the party with which he is accustomed to associate himself. Instances of this temporary defection are common enough on the Liberal side. But this is a distinctly different case from that of a man who, whilst permanently holding and consistently advocating certain political views, sits on the side of the House whence those views are persistently opposed.

Everybody would like to drop out of controversy one who has the peculiar claims upon consideration which pertain to a man whose strength is the weakness that comes with fourscore years. But since Roebuck (or Roebuck's indiscreet friends) does not hesitate to challenge public opinion on this particular issue, the truth must be told; and the truth about Roebuck is that few men have so long enjoyed opportunities so large and have used them to effect so little good. He has established a claim upon the respect and esteem neither of persons nor of parties. His hand has been against every one, and if a hand has been held out to him with friendly intent he has bitten it. He has snarled himself into notoriety, and has enjoyed the sort of consideration which one gives to an ill-conditioned dog that follows at one's heels, and sniffs with suspicious intent of presently snapping. Vain, self-seeking, egotistical, unfaithful, and unloving, Roebuck has made no friends in political life, and has won no esteem. That he should now pose before the public as an injured patriarch, and should whimper because somebody has taken the seat he abuses, is evidence of declining mental power. Time was when he would have been too acute to have put himself in so false a position.

May 30.—Death
in the House.

"The Angel of Death has passed over the House. You may almost hear the rustling of his wings."

What he has left after his passage is lying stretched on two chairs in the Library—the stalwart frame of a man who entered an hour ago, apparently in blooming health, and ready for his usual night's work. Only last night Wykeham-Martin made one of his few public appearances in the House. He has

been in Parliament over twenty years, but has, for the most part, been content to sit silent, and vote with his party. Last night, having a question to put about some unprincipled person suspected of tampering with the purity of hops, he mentioned that he had not put a question for ten years; and the House listened with a rare indulgence, which it is now pleasant to reflect upon, to the discursive and—using the word in a Parliamentary sense—disorderly speech, with which he prefaced his question. But he will never put a question, or make a speech, any more, and the House has an uneasy consciousness that it should not be at work whilst the familiar figure is lying covered with a table-cloth in the darkened Library.

One other has gone hence, whose step or voice will never more be heard. This morning Russell Gurney died. Everybody is grieved, and feels as though he had lost a personal friend. But Gurney was talking of retiring. He seemed to have made up his account with life, and that he should have swiftly closed it this morning is sudden, but is not unexpected. Moreover, he died a good many streets off. There is not the consciousness of all but personal contact with a dead body which pervades the benches with the knowledge of near neighbourhood to the Silent Member in the Library.

The House struggles on for awhile amid the gloom and the strange silence that weigh upon it—a silence stranger because everybody speaks in whispers, and members crossing the floor walk softly, as though they were actually in the chamber of the dead. Lowe attempts to discuss University Education in Ireland; but his speech is halting, his arguments are unwontedly confused, and nobody seems to listen to him. Stafford Northcote sits on the Treasury bench with hands buried in his coat sleeves, and head held down under overhanging hat. It is evident that he would gladly move the adjournment of the House; but he fears lest he should be accused of doing fresh injustice to Ireland by thus interrupting, on so trifling a plea, a debate in which the Irish members are interested. At length Bowyer, for once in harmony with the general feeling, moves the adjournment, and everybody gladly goes home, quitting hastily a scene of busy life into which Death, probably after having strolled around the tombs in Westminster Abbey—has suddenly thrust his appalling presence.

May 31. — Vicarious bravery. *Apropos* of the despatch of Indian troops to Europe, the following parody on the popular music-hall doggerel is circulated in the House :—

“ We don't want to fight;
But, by jingo, if we do,
We'll stay at home and sing our songs
And send the mild Hindoo.” *

June 2. — Lord Randolph Churchill and Lord Charles Beresford. Seated respectively above and below the gangway, there might have been observed, one evening in the summer of 1878, two young men of noble mien and ancient lineage. If the stranger had been called upon to decide which of the two was the elder, he certainly would have claimed seniority for him that sat below the gangway. Slighter in build, not quite so straight in the shoulders, and inclined to be sallow in complexion, Lord Randolph Churchill lacks the physical bloom of Lord Charles Beresford. Lord Charles has spent a useful life on the ocean wave, and for nearly twenty years has done business on the Great Waters. Lord Randolph has stopped ashore, has burned the oil at midnight, and has of late suffered from a consuming fire of marvel and indignation at the Ministerial existence of Sclater-Booth.

Lord Charles has never known what it is to feel towards any human being as Lord Randolph feels towards the hapless President of the Local Government Board. Life has been to him a pleasant yacht voyage, and the summer sky under which he sailed has never but once been overclouded, and then it was by a countenance of Eastern cast, innocent, confiding, artless, but changing, as he steadfastly gazed, into an aspect of appalling duplicity, and of an infinite capacity for unlawfully cashing cheques. For a moment, perhaps for a day, Lord Charles's views of life and his fellow-men were coloured by the discovery of Tom Fat's iniquity. But the effect was temporary,

* “ We don't want to fight;
But, by jingo, if we do,
We've got the men, we've got the ships,
And we've got the money too.”

This is the original of the refrain which has historic value as giving a name to a temporarily predominant party in the State.

the ever-welling fount of good-humour washing away the gangrene.*

With Lord Randolph it is different. Selater-Booth never betrayed his trust, nor is Lord Randolph poorer by a ten-pound note because the President of the Local Government Board has learned to write. And yet the fact of the existence of the right hon. gentleman is ever present in his mind, weighing him down with a load that is never eased, poisoning his joys and crippling his energies. The spectacle of Selater-Booth comfortably disposed on the Treasury bench with his hands folded across his chest, his head thrown back, his nose in the air, and his countenance indicating a struggle between a natural tendency to go to sleep and a consciousness that the President of the Local Government Board ought to keep awake, is madness to his soul. When the right hon. gentleman rises to answer a question or make a statement, Lord Randolph, after a violent struggle to retain his self-possession, is fain hastily to quit the House.

This is a sad blow to a young man just entering upon a career. One of weaker mind would have sunk under the infliction. Lord Randolph, finding it impossible to shake off the depressing influence, seeks relief in the exercise of the faculties of a legislator. Just as some men, who have been smitten by a great calamity, or whose vigour is sapped by a fell disease, studiously divert their thoughts into new and strange channels, so Lord Randolph searches in the deep pools of the Irish Education question for relief from the ever-present consciousness of the existence of Selater-Booth. On Tuesday night he brought on a resolution dealing with this intricate question, and gave fresh evidence that in Lord Randolph Churchill the Conservative Party (if they can keep him) have the promise of unusually high talents.

That he should step forward to deal with a question which has distracted statesmen and destroyed ministries is not of itself surprising. But the interlude had a special attraction when it was found that Lord Charles Beresford was prepared with an amendment on the resolution of his noble friend. Lord Charles,

* Tom Fat, a Chinese boy, whom Lord Charles Beresford brought home and installed as his personal servant, made himself proficient in imitation of his master's signature, gained possession of his cheque-book, and over a period of some years robbed him of many thousand pounds.

as far as his special views could be gathered, is in favour of denominational education. But the grounds upon which he supported his plea would, perhaps, be scarcely acceptable to Cardinal Manning. In brief, Lord Charles thinks that forms of religion are in the extremest degree immaterial.

"Religion," he frankly confided to the Speaker, "is all a matter of birth," and as a good many people in Ireland are born in the Roman Catholic faith, Lord Charles thinks they may as well be educated in schools where Roman Catholic formulæ are observed.

This frank and sailor-like method of severing with a cutlass the Gordian knot of the religious difficulty was particularly charming to Lowther. He forgot for a moment that he was Chief Secretary for Ireland, and positively chortled with delight as the youthful Lord Charles delivered from the moral elevation of his white neckcloth these views about religious denominations.

"If a Buddhist or a Mahomedan runs straight, he has as much chance of going to heaven as I have," Lord Charles sang out on the starboard side of Lowther, whose unrestrained enjoyment of these heterodox views had drawn upon him the mild and almost reproachful glance of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

If, at that moment, it had fallen to the lot of the Chief Secretary for Ireland to rise and state the views of her Majesty's Government on the subject, there is too much reason to fear that he would at once have declared his acquiescence in "the remarks of his noble friend behind him," and might even have promised to bring in a Bill based upon them. Fortunately a number of speakers interposed; and Lowther, having an opportunity of remembering his responsible position, contented himself with privately conveying to Lord Charles Beresford the simple but earnest inquiry—

"What about Tom Fat?"

"Fat," said Lord Charles, in an audible whisper, "will certainly be in the Fire." A constitutional deference for Parliamentary usage prevented his particularising the flames.

This all happened on Tuesday; and to-night, with the ardour of debate toned down, the two young men of noble mien and high lineage (as mentioned at the beginning of this record) sit, one above and one below the gangway, furtively regarding each

other. John Manners, standing in a graceful attitude, with one hand on the arm of the Speaker's chair, looks upon them with paternal fondness. Generations have lived and laughed at the immortal couplet in which Lord John pleaded for the preservation of "our old Nobility," even at the expense of Laws and Learning, Arts and Commerce. Let those laugh who win; and Lord John may be forgiven the pleased smile which curls his expressive features. For surely his Muse is justified when Lord Randolph Churchill thus takes charge of Education in Ireland, and Lord Charles Beresford is acknowledged by James Lowther to be an authority on essential points of religion.

June 3.—A modest member.

Everybody is sorry to hear that when the new Parliament meets, the place which has known Sir Frederick Perkins will know him no more. The senior member for Southampton came in with the Parliament of 1874, and he will go out with it. Why he should have taken this decision I do not know. Southampton cannot be tired of him, having shown its partiality by five times electing him chief magistrate. The House of Commons is not weary of him, for the best possible reason. He belongs to a class of politicians which too lightly leavens our latest Parliament. He is understood to be sound on all possible points where a Liberal politician might tap him. Adam can always depend upon him when it is desirable to marshal the serried ranks of the Opposition; and if need be he can make a decent speech. I remember well how gallantly he stood up for Southampton, when on a summer evening long past the late Ward Hunt was bombarded with recommendations of towns which man and nature had combined to make eminently and exceptionally suitable for the site of a naval college. Every town on the south coast, from Dartmouth to Dover, had its representative and its recommendation. But Perkins was able to show that if there was a town in the three kingdoms in which naval cadets might not only thrive but might be expected to spring up spontaneously, Southampton was the place. Later, he skilfully conducted a campaign against the singular determination to adopt a site which was condemned by the report of the Committee itself. I forget whether he won the day for Southampton. But he certainly dashed the hopes of Dartmouth, and if he did not succeed in having the college erected on the best

possible site, he averted the national calamity of having it built on the worst.

But, save on this particular subject, with an occasional speech in Committee, and a not infrequent question on a practical subject addressed to a member of the Ministry, Sir Frederick has been content to leave the weariness of talk to others. The historian of his Parliamentary career will never be able to describe how, when half a dozen members had determined to make a night of it, Sir Frederick wrapped his martial cloak around him and laid himself down in the library to sleep, with instructions to the attendant to call him as often as the division bell rang. He has never stood on one leg and shaken his fist at the Prime Minister. He has never defied Raikes, nor given occasion to Captain Gosset to loosen his sword in its truculent-looking scabbard. He has never been called to order by the Speaker. He has not even, like Sir Thomas Bazley, associated his name and his presence with a particular seat. Natural modesty has driven him to the uttermost end of the House, and when he has risen to address the Speaker it has been from a seat as near as possible to the door, thus affording means of strategic retreat should his modesty be overcome by the concentrated attention of the House, or the enthusiastic applause of an excited assembly.

Sir Frederick is, in brief, a fair model of the class of men who form the backbone of the House of Commons. A practical business man, he avoids much speaking, and is content to assist in the performance of work. The House is sorry that he must go, for it could better spare a more voluble man. The people of Southampton may induce him to reconsider his determination. If not, pray Heaven or Southampton to send us an equally good man.

June 5. — The Derby Day. Henry Lennox is back to-day after a prolonged absence, and having carefully turned up his trousers a couple of inches, so as to leave his ankles free from impediment, is skipping about the House like a young fawn. Like many other members, Lord Henry has been drawn down to the House at this unprecedented hour by an unwonted attack on the British Constitution, the better to resist which, Henry Thynne is sternly on guard in the lobby. It is proposed that

the House, departing from its usage, shall sit on the Derby Day, and a thrill of horror has passed through the assembly.

Mr. Chaplin's new coat. The chosen champion on behalf of the time-honoured adjournment is, naturally, Chaplin.

Perhaps a better man might have been found, since it appears necessary that the topic should be treated lightly, and Chaplin's *forte* does not lie in banter. He has, nevertheless, a few jokes, and as the House of Commons is never so grateful to any as to him who will make it laugh, or who even takes some pains in that direction, Chaplin would have got on very well but for his coat. This, it would appear, was a new one, and Chaplin having apparently hurried down from his tailor's, after having had the garment tried on, was hopelessly smitten with imitative craze. Before he got to the third sentence he had, with both hands, taken his coat by the collar, and, with singular deftness, lifted it up, and lightly shaken it on his shoulders, as a tailor does when it is hinted to him that a coat does not fit so well as it might. Then he turned his attention to the fit about the chest, and spent some minutes in carefully smoothing the coat in that direction. A laugh behind appeared to suggest that perhaps the coat was not such an admirable fit in the back as it should be; so, whilst he made mild little jokes about horse-racing, Chaplin earnestly pressed his coat down at the back, pulled it, twitched it, and smoothed it with laborious care.

It was very awkward that he should have worn this particular coat upon an occasion like this. The Admiral, who had been watching the performance with great concern, now turned round in his seat, convinced that all was well. But, after a few more increasingly mild jokes, the supposed maladroitness of fit again pressed itself upon Chaplin's attention; and, before the assembled Commons of Great Britain, he once more went through the familiar process of "trying on," beginning at the collar, and going by easy stages to the back. Of course this was an accident, but it rather distracted attention; and Chaplin's speech was not so successful as, for example, that in which he once managed to rouse Gladstone.

But the untoward incident did not affect the division; and when, in due course, Henry Lennox tripped forward to

assist in "telling," the majority was so large, and the cheers so enthusiastic, that the demonstration quite overcame Lord Henry, who simpered like a schoolgirl, and blushed with conscious pride at the part he had prominently taken in defending the British Constitution.

June 13. — Mr. Rylands on Foreign Policy. House resumes to-night after the Whitsun recess, and promptly takes up the illimitable thread of the debate on affairs in the East. Standing at his too-familiar corner seat below the gangway, with a sheaf of notes in his hand, a pair of *pince-nez* deftly fixed on the uttermost tip of his nose, so that he may look over them at his audience or through them at his notes, the head well thrown back, the lofty brow raised to catch the rays of sympathetic light, the venerable grey beard spread out in sight of thoughtless young men opposite, the restless body and the long arms which can do anything but repose—this is Peter Rylands. "Any one that studies 'istory," Peter says, dropping the "h" with his spectacles. Peter has studied 'istory, "*au fond*," as he would say if he dare trust himself with the pronunciation. He is full of 'istory, so full that he has not room for the initial "h." He has taken 'istory in at the pores, and if the House will only listen he will demonstrate to it how "short-sighted is the diplomacy of the Foreign Office."

But, alas! the House will not listen. There are not many here, and such as there are talk to each other of the weather, of the Congress, of the past holiday, of the coming work, of the pending dissolution, of anything that will distract their attention from 'istory and Peter. Hartington has not come back yet, and Forster has missed an opportunity of figuring in the seat of the Leader of the Opposition. Gladstone is there, eager, intense, and conversational. He talks without pause to Dodson, doubtless inciting him to enlist in the jovial company of the Shepherds, of which ancient mysterious order he has just become a neophyte. Dodson listens quietly, and from time to time sadly shakes his head. He seems to be saying that he is getting too old for these little relaxations. But Gladstone is not to be rebuffed, and talks away at him, enforcing his arguments with incessant gesture.

On the Treasury bench there is a full muster of Ministers,

a united and a happy family. Cross, who has undertaken the temporary charge of the Foreign Office, as he would undertake to review the troops at Aldershot if invited, is persistently and remorselessly pursuing the last remnant of finger-nail an unrestrained appetite has left him. The Chancellor of the Exchequer looks positively rosy, and has evidently been sporting among the early haycocks down in Devonshire. Bourke, whose courage enabled him to meet with a ghastly smile the information that Charley had been preferred as Common Serjeant of the City of London, has had the smile stereotyped. He smiles, now, a wearied, mechanical smile, as with arms folded and head hung down he "makes believe" to listen to Peter. The Admiral is there, of course; but there are not beyond him a dozen members on that side. Opposite are three gentlemen on the front bench, four scattered about the benches behind, and nine below the gangway.

Next to the orator, solemn, silent, brooding upon fate, sits Edward Jenkins. Lower down, on the same bench, is Plimsoll, who has come back to the House this session, and is always deeply engaged in studying a paper, understood among the irreverent to be Charles Adderley's patent of peerage. Just behind the orator is that other great authority on foreign affairs, Jacob Bright, and below him looms the portly, pleased presence of Thomas Bayley Potter—"Old Bayley" as Lowther calls him—the sturdy, simple-minded Radical, who was not to be lured from his principles by the offer of the monarchy of Malta, or the suzerainty of Ceylon.

These, some thirty in all, make up the audience before whom Peter pours out the treasures of a mind which, for comprehensiveness and grasp, has few equals and no rivals. If they would only listen it would be some satisfaction. Once he arrests attention as his voice is heard above the buzz of conversation hurling a challenge at the Treasury bench.

"I Challenge the Home Secretary—where is the Home Secretary?" Peter adds, observing that Cross has left the House.

The voice thrills through the audience, as thrilled through Jack the Giant Killer the voice of the gentleman who "smelt the blood of an Englishman," and would fain have drunk it.

"Then I Challenge the Chancellor of the Exchequer,"

Peter cried, changing, with great presence of mind, the address of the cartel.

The House was suddenly attracted by this suggestion of bellicose Peter and the mild Sir Stafford having a meeting in the early morning. But it turned out that what Peter "challenged" was only the production of some precedents, and once more the House resolved itself into Committee of Conversation, and amid the persistent hum of voices was heard in fitful gusts Peter's voice reciting lessons in 'istory.

Mr. Edward
Jenkins.

After Peter came Edward Jenkins. When Jenkins is Prime Minister he means to make Peter Chancellor of the Exchequer. In the meantime he seconded his resolution, and took the opportunity of abusing our great patriot-statesman, Lord Beaconsfield. Jenkins has not succeeded in making himself popular or attractive in the House of Commons. But it cannot be denied that he is possessed of considerable pluck. It requires no inconsiderable courage to stand up in Parliament just now and say aloud of our illustrious Premier those things which are current in daily conversation, and are written in the political controversy of the last thirty years. It may be further observed that, regarded in his public character, tact seems absolutely absent from the constitution of the member for Dundee. It cannot be said that he delights in running his head against the stone wall of common usage in respect of good manners and good taste. He does not know when he does it. He has, in truth, only one standard of measurement: Does a particular course of action agree with his individual views? If so, good; if not, very much worse than bad. Jenkins is like the Man of Taste described by Bramstone. Underneath every sentence of his many speeches you hear the refrain—

"This is true taste, and whoso likes it not
Is blockhead, coxcomb, puppy, fool, and sot."

His vituperation is worked on the principle of the swivel gun. Some men are content to abuse their opponents. The catholicity of Jenkins's contempt renders invisible the lines of demarcation, either of private friendship or of party fealty. He is as ready to instruct or denounce Hartington as he is to

impeach Lord Beaconsfield, and will gird at Gladstone with as much satisfaction as he will knock on the head Stafford Northcote. Brought to the test of his own perfectibility, all men are convicted of error, and if the pleasure had not worn off with undue repetition, there would be no spectacle more pleasing than that of Edward Jenkins standing below the gangway, and from the altitude of his own superiority beating together the heads of Ministerialists and gentlemen of the Opposition.

This habit of impartial condemnation has resulted in minimising his personal popularity. Not to put too fine a point on it, he is perhaps one of the least-liked men in the House. The difference of the attitude of the House towards him and Peter, for example, is strongly marked. Both are regarded as bores, and each is accused of a pretentiousness to a superiority of intelligence, information, and statesmanlike ability wholly unjustified by their acquirements. But whilst Peter is gently jeered and good-humouredly chaffed, Jenkins is howled at with undisguised animosity. It is recognised that Peter has no evil intention. He *really* believes that he knows more about all political questions, especially questions of foreign politics, than any authority, ancient or modern, and he talks in obedience to irresistible natural impulses. He would not hurt a fly, and though he has shown himself very bellicose of late, and has with outstretched hand fiercely denounced Turkey and all its works, it is probable that if a Bashi-Bazouk were to stray within the paddock of Massey Hall, Peter would take him in and feed him, provide him with a short pipe, and do nothing worse to him than explain how he saved fourteen-pence on the Civil Service Estimates, and hint that if Bashi-Bazoukery ever wants a financial regenerator, *à la* Goschen in Egypt, a letter addressed to Massey Hall, Cheshire, would reach the proper hands.

Jenkins, on the contrary, selects with deliberation, and ostentatiously parades, the worst things he can say about those who differ from him. He turns over in his mind a few phrases modelled on the style of the late Mr. Disraeli, brings them down to the House, and delivers them in a passionless manner, cunningly designed to add to their effect. He lays himself out to stroke the House of Commons the wrong way, and the measure of his success is bounded only by the absence of importance attached to his remarks.

But withal Jenkins is a man of courage, and courage is always admirable. It may be in this case that his disregard of the opinion of the House arises from an incapacity to understand the impulses and general notions on which that opinion is formed. However that be, the fact remains, that if there is anything that should be said, and from saying which men of more sensitive natures shrink, here is a man that will say it. Moreover, Jenkins will say what he has at heart in a very presentable manner. He is, as a speaker, at least up to the average of the House of Commons. His addresses are not lacking in literary finish. He has a good voice, and a manner of delivery which, though carefully studied, and in the course of a long speech apt to grow monotonous, has in it the making of a good style. If he were only more doubtful with respect to himself, and more deferential in the presence of others, his political career would speedily become more profitable to the country and less unpleasant to his friends.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"PEACE WITH HONOUR."

Loud Voices—Some Scotch Members—Mr. Duncan McLaren—Mr. Dalrymple—Mr. Ramsay—Mr. Yeaman—Sir Edward Colebrooke—An impressive Orator—The Brothers Harcourt—The Country Gentleman—The Politician—A new Method of Strangulation—An exciting Scene—Lord Beaconsfield's Speech on his Return from the Berlin Congress—Lord Derby's little Joke.

June 19.—Loud voices. There are several members of the House who have a loud voice. Marten, Robert Montagu, and George Campbell, for example, speak above a whisper. But Synan, whose recent unexpected return created such a sensation in the House, positively and literally shouts at the top of his voice. This carried through a speech of an hour's duration, becomes, it is easy to understand, slightly deafening to those within hail. It is curious to observe the benches around where Synan sits empty as he proceeds. When he was shouting his sentiments to-night on the question of University Education

in Ireland, Lowther was observed walking hastily along the lobby leading from the House.

"Halloa! where are you going?" said a member, surprised that the Chief Secretary for Ireland should absent himself from an important discussion with which his department was chiefly concerned.

"I am going on to the Terrace to hear Synan," said James, hurrying off.

June 20.—Some
Scotch mem-
bers.

Strangers to-night, and any who may survive the experience of Tuesday, will ever connect the House of Commons with the dreariest, deadest level of human assemblages. It is difficult to say which has proved the more depressing topic, the Scotch Church question or the mystery of Scotch Roads and Bridges. The only intelligent notion an outsider could be expected to bear away with him would be that there are as many sects in Scotland as there are roads and bridges. Another idea he would gather is one of marvel at Duncan McLaren's intimate acquaintance alike with churches, roads, and bridges. The senior member for Edinburgh has an insatiable appetite for details and figures, and the only mistake he makes is his belief that other men are equally avid.

Mr. Duncan
McLaren.

To-night McLaren's world is bounded by Scotch Roads and Bridges, and he has come down prepared with blue books and extracts, with the amiable intention of making the House fully acquainted with the business. Standing in the corner seat, with hands clasped and sad entreaty stamped upon his face, he tells a story which would doubtless be agonising if it were audible. But—timorously to repeat what Sir George Campbell has been flouted for openly saying—there are times when McLaren's voice sinks below the key at which it is audible throughout the House. The inconvenience is increased by a habit he has contracted of confidentially addressing the blue book or report he holds in his hand. Members turn restlessly in their seats, and cry "Agreed!" as McLaren, having deliberately strolled down one side of a Road ten miles long, crosses the Bridge, and proceeds to walk up the other side. The Admiral snorts impatience and coughs deprecation. McLaren takes no notice till the sounds begin to drown

his voice, and then he announces that "if hon. members do not care to hear what he has to say, they can go away, but he means to say it."

Amongst the most impatient auditors is Lord Elcho, who cannot understand why any man should want to make a speech after he (Elcho) has set forth his opinion. It is a peculiarity about the noble lord's Parliamentary oratory, that he rarely begins a speech without the remark, "I should not have risen, but——" In the course of a session "buts" are never lacking, and Elcho rises often enough, having first folded the orders of the day in the form of a *bâton*, with which he enforces his arguments.

The Lord Advocate has attempted to add an adventitious air of lightness to the debate by assuming a white hat, and, generally, a jaunty appearance. He lays aside the former from time to time, and, approaching the table, offers a few observations in that intonation peculiar to the trained reciter of blank verse. Half a dozen of the rare Scotchmen whom constituencies north of the Tweed return to Parliament to sit on the Conservative benches, are in their places, prepared to back Ministers in any assertion they may make.

Mr. Dalrymple. Dalrymple has astonished everybody by making a speech in which he disclosed quite unexpected powers of sarcasm. This was on Tuesday night, when W. Holms's amendment was under consideration. Dalrymple speaks again to-night, but does not renew the effect, though he preserves the identical manner. Differing from Goschen, Dalrymple derives sustenance for his oratorical powers by rubbing his shins against the bench before him. Goschen, it will be remembered, is stricken dumb if by any accident his calves miss the companionship of the sharp edge of the bench behind him. With Dalrymple the effect is the same, though from a different application. He presses his right leg against the bench *before* him, and if in the course of his remarks he accidentally removes it from the point of contact, his voice suddenly dies away, rising again when, noting the accident, he leans once more against the bench.

When this is satisfactorily arranged, he can make some good points. Nature has gifted him with a curiously *blasé*

aspect. You might expect him at any moment to declare that "man does not please me, nor woman either." He seems to have gone through everything, and wearied of all. For McLaren to throw himself thus enthusiastically into such a question as that of Roads and Bridges is attributable to youthful enthusiasm. Dalrymple has run through the Roads and Bridges stage, and has found all vanity. He says as much to-night in a brief speech brought to a sudden conclusion by his having inadvertently withdrawn his right leg from contact with the bench. His speech closed there naturally, as it might have closed at any other stage of the opening sentences. Happening just here, Dalrymple did not care to set the machinery in motion again, and abruptly sat down.

Mr. Ramsay. Ramsay is a model Scotchman of the type which, perhaps, exists rather in the vulgar imagination than to any extent in real life. Heaven has been bountiful to him in many things, but has utterly denied him the sense of humour. Life is to him—as it was to Rab, that memorable Scotch dog—"a serious thing." In the course of a long and useful life he has observed people, even in the House of Commons, open their mouths wide, roll their bodies about, and emit curious sounds, something between a shout and a shriek. He knows that this is called "laughter." But how laughter is made, whether it is a temporary indisposition like whooping-cough, or whether it is an hereditary disease like the gout, liable to break out at any time, he is not sure. All he knows is, that it is rather unpleasant, and, on the whole, a waste of time. Not that he is himself a morose man. He is pleasant and affable in manner, and has a remarkable acquaintance with all that relates to public affairs in Scotland. But he is notable for this, that while a sense of humour is, with most men, a matter of degree, he is absolutely devoid of it. To-night, having placed on the paper an amendment that would take Raikes at least a quarter of an hour to read, he gravely interposed with the remark that perhaps the amendment might be taken as read. He was alarmed by the sudden outbreak of one of those uproarious manifestations he has heard alluded to as "laughter;" but he felt quite sure that he had not been guilty

of making a joke, and with much evident self-communing arrived at the conclusion that the "Comm-tee," as he calls it, had gone a little daft.

Mr. Yeaman. Yeaman, sitting on a back seat, is content with turning the Bill over and over, and looking wondrous wise. The only thing that Yeaman professes to understand is the Eastern Question, and with respect to that he has an infallible guide. His process is to the following effect: In private conversation, if any phase of the Eastern Question is discussed, he will say, "Ah! well, yes," varied by "Ah! well, no." Should the matter become subject for debate in the House, he sits all through the discussion looking increasingly wise as the debate proceeds, and when the division is announced, he just follows the Marquis of Lorne into whichever lobby he may go. This, he finds, saves a deal of trouble, and is, on the whole, satisfactory. Lorne is in his place to-night as becomes a Scotch member, and sits through as much of the debate as he can. George Balfour, having made a passionate appeal to the Secretary of State, has left the House. Tollemache Sinclair has taken to sit below the gangway since that night when Gladstone conversed with a friend whilst he (Sir Tollemache) was making a speech on the Eastern Question. Edward Colebrooke is on his feet again, and I am falling into that troubled sleep in which most members are wrapt.

Sir Edward Colebrooke. The light fades; the figures on the floor of the House intermingle; the canopy of the Speaker's chair gently leans forward and extinguishes Raikes; a thick Scotch mist envelops the familiar scene; and through it all I can hear, mellowed as if by distance, the rasping voice of Colebrooke with its curious lapses into inarticularity:

"Mr. Raikes, the hon. member below me, has—naar—naar—naar—attempted to show that the inhabitants of Glasgow pay—naar—naar—naar—more than they ought to—naar—naar—naar—naar—"

June 27.—An impressive orator. The discussion of the regulations with respect to cattle naturally brings Barttelot to the fore. Sir Walter occupies a unique position in the House, and he feels the

responsibility. He delivers his opinions with a deliberation, an emphasis, and a vigour of gesture which create the profoundest impression in the Strangers' Gallery. It is impossible to precisely describe in words the manner of the baronet's speech. But I have taken down, "*verbattim*," as Biggar says, a few remarks made by him just now, when opposing Forster's resolution on Cattle Plague Orders. If the intelligent reader will, whilst he recites aloud this passage, fill up with brief pauses the spaces indicated, will raise his voice in accusatory tone where he finds words in italics, and will threaten with denunciatory gesture anybody who may be in his immediate neighbourhood, he will afford himself and his family some notion of what we hear in the House of Commons when Sir Walter Barttelot is speaking:—

"Yet *he knows*—and—*knows full well*—in the—position he occupies—making a proposal of this kind—must be one—which—must be—fatal—to—the Bill. *No one knows better* than the right hon. gentleman—no one—*knows so well*—as the right hon. gentleman—that when—he—raises a great question of *this kind*—upon a Bill of *this sort*,—*namely* upon the second reading—of—this Bill—that that proposal—that he makes—is absolutely against the principle—of—the Bill. Now, I—de—ny—that the principle—of—this Bill—is confined—and *is to be found*—in the 5th schedule—of—the Bill."

Here is another sample taken a few minutes later:—

"Now Denmark—it is a *remark*—able country is *Den*—mark—for—we have little—or no—dis—ease from *Den*—mark. The importation—from *Den*—mark—is something like fifty-six—thousand—cattle—and *the* curious part of it is this that *nineteen*—thousand—of these—were—cows—and *these cows* came—to—this country—and—had been allowed to go—*all over*—this country—and—I have never yet heard—that these cows—that—have so—gone over *this country*—have spread any disease—in this country—."

The effect of this impressive speech upon the House, more particularly upon the country gentry, is highly gratifying. They plume themselves upon the heaven-born oratory of one of their own number, and whilst Sir Walter is speaking, Greene, who sits on the other side of the gangway (and is freed from those anxieties with respect to his hat which flutter the soul of Walpole (who sits just below the energetic baronet),

looks proudly and confidently at gentlemen opposite as one who should say :

"You talk about your Gladstones and your Brights ; what do you think of *this* ?"

June 28. — The Brothers Harcourt. It is a trite expression that history repeats itself. But the triteness implies a foundation of truth, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the

case of the brothers Moses and Aaron, and that of the brothers who represent the city of Oxford and the county of Oxford.

"I am not eloquent," Moses pleaded when he was selected for his great work : "I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue."

And the answer came back, "Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother ? I know that he can speak well."

Thus might Colonel Harcourt have answered when invited by the electors of Oxfordshire to go forth and save the State at a time when it was menaced by the haters of the lowly Turk.

"I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue," said the Colonel to the deputation that waited upon him.

"Is not Vernon the Liberal thy brother ?" quickly asked the spokesman of the deputation. "We know too truly that he can speak not only well but much."

And so the Colonel's scruples were overcome, and now he sits dumb but watchful on the Conservative benches, the spare form of the Admiral just in front of him brought out in relief by the bountiful expanse of his white waistcoat.

Apart from this mark of modern civilisation there is much about Colonel Harcourt that reminds one of the historic Moses. Had Moses been returned to the ninth Parliament of Queen Victoria he certainly would have sat on the Conservative benches. A man of few words, inclined for action rather than rhetoric, he would never have felt comfortable on the same benches as Fawcett, Joseph M'Kenna, Rylands, and Parnell. He would have taken kindly to Hartington, but I much doubt whether he would have made a bosom friend of Gladstone. As for Biggar, he certainly would have been playing tricks with him, and the progress of an Irish debate would have been startlingly interrupted by the attention of the Speaker being called to the fact that the Member for Cavan had been transformed into a brazen serpent.

The country gentleman. The expression on the Colonel's face varies in no appreciable degree. Even when his gifted brother is addressing the House only the acute observer may discern that his countenance is sicklied o'er with a pale cast of disgust. That people like O'Donnell, Rylands, and Campbell should deliberately rise from a sitting posture and talk, without interval, for a space of from thirty to one hundred and twenty minutes is to him a matter for pure wonder. But when one's own brother gives way to this weakness the matter grows past bearing. The Colonel never removes his glance from his brother as he stands at the table and beats the box and goes through a gymnastic exercise imitated, like his other oratorical accomplishments, from the great man who is now Lord Beaconsfield. Aaron knows that the quiet glance of Moses is upon him, and although, with characteristic audacity, he attempts to disguise the conviction, it works upon him with undiminished effect. His gestures grow wilder, his voice is louder, and his manner betrays a restlessness that causes Hartington to edge a little further from the neighbourhood of the box. But the empty show cannot long be maintained. The steady glance, in which wonder, contempt, and sorrow rather than anger mingle, acts upon Aaron with slow but irresistible effect, and having braved it for a space of time that speaks wonders for his courage and determination, he abruptly sits down.

The politician. This is probably the secret of Sir William Harcourt's desertion of the assembly in which he was formerly so prominent a personage. When the new Parliament met, the ex-Solicitor-General was pretty constant in his attendance, and, largely exercising his new-born privilege of speaking from the front bench, caused much uneasiness to Forster, who "cannot abear these young men" aping the leadership. Very early in the history of the new Parliament he distinguished himself by turning upon the man who had bestowed upon him his title, attacking him with a violence of which Chaplin's performances are a poor copy. When the leadership was settled by the steady advance of Hartington in the confidence of the party and the favour of Parliament, the commanding figure of Sir William Harcourt

grew less familiar. A year later he had brought to the highest degree of perfection the art of turning up promiscuously in a debate and settling the matter at issue off-hand in a few cheery remarks. Between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, arrayed in evening dress and with a crush hat lightly but firmly held under his elbow, he would steal softly up the floor of the House and throw himself upon the front Opposition bench. Probably the debate in progress was one which had occupied members throughout the sultry watches of the night. They may have sat all through it in the honest endeavour to master the argument on either side, and were now desirous of setting forth the conclusion at which they had arrived. To these commonplace people it was unspeakably exasperating presently to find Sir William Harcourt on his legs, with an after-dinner glow upon his manly features, summing up the whole case, delivering judgment, and sentencing somebody—a friend as often as a foe—to instant and ignominious execution.

It has, naturally, sometimes happened that he has betrayed his absolute ignorance of the course of the debate. Something may have been said about nine o'clock which altered the issue as set forth on the Orders of the Day. This was awkward, but not fatal; and as for the sneers and cutting remarks of members who dwelt upon the inaccuracy, that was the spice of the whole entertainment. The debate, hitherto dull, would take a sudden turn. Possibly the particular interest dealt with would have its importance obscured amid the clash of personal attack and defence. But at least matters had been made lively, and Sir William, with folded arms and pleased countenance, surveyed the erewhile tranquil scene now disturbed beyond hope of subsidence.

Moreover, it looked well in the morning papers next day to find Sir William Harcourt among the list of speakers. Appearing at the tail end of the debate, it would be evident to the reader, at Oxford or elsewhere, that Sir William, scorning the delights of society, and anxious chiefly to do his duty to his constituency and his country, had spent the whole of the evening listening to this dull debate, and had finally interposed to infuse into it the life and light born of culture and an accurate and exhaustive knowledge of law.

But the Colonel has changed all that. The versatile and

volatile man of learning, who claims kinship with the sovereign through the house of Argyle, and who has been known (though this happened a long time ago) to shake hands with Macdonald, has faced without flinching the laughter of the House of Commons, the rapier thrusts of Disraeli, and the sledge-hammer blows of Gladstone. But the cold, steady stare of the member for Oxfordshire freezes him. With this familiar figure directly opposite him he cannot sing the old songs and dare not invent the new. So he has forsaken the House, and Hartington, having no one to edge him up on the right, is beginning to drift farther and farther away from the box on the table which marks the place of the Leader of the Opposition, and Forster, with his legs more than ever all over the place, is sunning himself in the warmth of unexampled prosperity.

July 1.—A new method of strangulation. A remarkable simile was put forward this afternoon in the uncongenial atmosphere of a Committee-room in the House of Commons. The subject under consideration was the East London Railway Company's Bill, and among the witnesses was Knatchbull-Hugessen. In the course of his evidence he compared the Company to a man struggling in deep water with two heavy weights attached to his legs, who, unless a rope were thrown to him, would be strangled!

This comes of writing fairy tales. It is only in Wonderland that men are strangled by means of heavy weights attached to their legs.

July 16.—An exciting scene. Mr. Giles, newly-elected member for Southampton, who made his maiden speech in opposition to the Government under whose banner he had won his election, to-night further distinguished himself by engrossing, for a few throbbing seconds, the anxious attention of the House of Commons. It happened during the debate on the Cattle Diseases Bill. The Government, abjured on all sides, had just received a fresh stroke from Sir Frederick Perkins, who, speaking on behalf of the important constituency of Southampton, urged its claims to compensation under the Bill. Whilst the cheers at this new opposition were rising up from the Liberal benches, a figure was observed suddenly to dart forward down the gangway between

the Ministerial benches. At first it was thought it was George Balfour gone astray and grown suddenly white. But, upon closer inspection, the figure was recognised as that of Giles, who bears a striking resemblance to what Sir George is likely to be when he has dwelt another ten years in this vale of tears, where a man is not allowed to make long speeches, and where existence is preserved to Secretaries of State. It is one of the fundamental principles of the British Constitution that no man may address the House of Commons whilst standing in the gangway. Giles happened to be sitting on the top bench, immediately facing the gangway; and, in the innocence of his heart and the excitement of the moment, he dashed from under the shadow of the gallery, and stood in the gangway with hand uplifted, like an elderly Ajax defying the sheet lightning.

A roar of painful astonishment went up to the glass roof of the House, and Erskine May, seated at the table, folded his hands and dropped his head as if Parliamentary life had at last grown unbearable. There is nothing moves the House of Commons so swiftly and suddenly as a breach of any of those little rules of debate which serve to preserve decorum. When on a memorable occasion Plimsoll stood on one leg and shook his fist at the Prime Minister, it was not the imperfect means of support thus selected, or even the forcible recognition of the presence of Disraeli, that shocked the House and raised the roar of execration. It was the fact that the member for Derby had crossed the red line marked upon the matting—that "thin streak of red" that gave as much trouble to Lord Eslington as did the line of the British Guards at Alma to the Russians—and was speaking midway on the floor.

Poor Giles had not the slightest notion why the House was shouting at him. He stood there endeavouring to lift his individual voice above the roar, trembling in undisguised alarm at this manifestation of discourtesy from an assembly from which he had still the right to expect the consideration always paid to a new member. Nor was his perturbation lessened by the fact that Newdegate had hold of his right coat-tail and was hauling him in as a ship is warped into dock, whilst Barttelot was strenuously seconding the motion by shouldering him in on the left. Giles, however, felt that the honour of Southampton was at stake. That he should be thus set upon in the face of the

House of Commons by two ordinarily quiet gentlemen, with whom he was at least on speaking terms, was wholly incomprehensible to him. But the calls of duty were firmer than the grip of the baronet's hand on his shoulder, and the ties of his constituency stronger than the thread that bound to his garment the coat-tail which Newdegate clung to.

Nor was Giles a man to be put down by clamour. So he stood for several seconds, planted firmly in the gangway, amid a scene of growing excitement. At length numbers prevailed over individual courage, and Giles being hauled into dock, discharged his cargo of observation in disproof of what his colleague had said. When he had finished he was allowed to back out, and returned to his seat on the top bench facing the gangway.

But all was not yet over. When he resumed his seat Dilke rose, and in a few words showed that Perkins was right and that Giles, in his renewed fidelity to the Government, was wrong. As soon as Dilke had made an end of speaking, a thrill went through the House. A thickly-set figure, wearing a coronet of scanty white hair and abundant whiskers of the same hue, flashed for a moment from under the gallery, and lo! here was Giles once more firmly set in the middle of the gangway, with uplifted hand and an evident desire to make a speech. A simultaneous roar burst forth from both sides of the House. With great presence of mind Newdegate once more seized his friend by the coat-tail, and Barttelot bringing up the reserves on his flank, Giles was by a simultaneous movement again hauled into dock, and the gates, as it were, shut upon him. Having said what he freshly had at heart, Giles—who was now growing accustomed to this process of debate, which he mentally compared, to its disadvantage, with that in vogue in the Southampton Town Council—left the dock and steamed back to his anchorage under the gallery, where he remained in a semi-dazed condition till the adjournment.

July 18. — Lord Beaconsfield's speech on his return from the Berlin Congress.

It was charming to see how Lord Beaconsfield, back from Berlin, bringing "Peace with Honour," entered just now, as if nothing particular were the matter, and as if the last thing in the world he expected was to find the House of Lords crowded from the floor to the roof of the canopy over the

Throne. In the same unpretentious and unexpected manner he had, a few minutes earlier, quitted the dull-looking house at the bottom of Downing Street. Whilst the thoughts of all the world were centred at Westminster, and whilst some thousands of hero-worshippers were thronging the gates of Palace Yard, the hero of the day was quietly walking down Parliament Street bent upon recommencing his Parliamentary duties interrupted by a trip to Berlin. He had not even done the day the honour of specially dressing for it. When Gladstone is about to make a great speech in the House of Commons, somebody—surely not himself—brushes him up, "tidies" him, and puts a flower in a button-hole of his coat. Beaconsfield did not do all his dressing in the far-off days when he wore ringlets and twirled a gold-headed cane, dexterously attached to his wrist by a silken tassel. Even now strangers may occasionally meet in the neighbourhood of Parliament Street a notable figure making its way through the throng. They note how frail and weary the body seems, how bent the shoulders, how sunken the cheeks, how leaden-hued the lineaments. But they also note the dauntless spirit which still affects a jaunty carriage, and makes-believe that progress is slowly made only because there is no hurry. They further observe with admiration the careful newness of the accessories of the figure—the shapely coat of the lightest material, the negligent but elegant neckcloth, the pearl-grey gloves guiltless of wrinkle, and the glossy hat.

These things are, however, only for commonplace occasions. To-day, which marks a crowning stage in a memorable career, let us put on the old coat, the second-best hat, and the dingy-brown trousers of long ago. Let us, also, walk down Parliament Street instead of driving in a coach and four, and let us take by surprise the crowd which has its back turned to us, and is eagerly scanning the interior of the stately equipages which drive into the Yard in quick succession.

A crowd in Palace Yard! A surging multitude by the railings! Beaconsfield was never more surprised in his life. What could be the matter? Had some one in authority been pulling up park railings, and was this ovation intended for the champions of the popular right? Had Gladstone been reducing some taxes, or freeing the Church, or emancipating the land, and was this the grateful throng come to sing pæans in his honour?

Beaconsfield could not imagine; but he walked slowly on unnoticed, and crossing on the right-hand side, as if he were making for the quietness and peace of the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, he turned sharply off to the left when he neared the gates of Old Palace Yard. Then with a sudden rush and a ringing cheer the surprised crowd closed round him, and threatened to carry him off his feet.

And so they bore him into the Houses of Parliament, whither his colleagues of the Commons had already arrived, breathless after the rush across the lobby. Here another surprise awaited him. Instead of the empty benches over which the sound of Big Ben chiming five o'clock usually booms, here was the chamber thronged in every part. At the far end, piled head over head, were the strangers in the gallery, and on either side, packed equally close, were many familiar faces, often turned upon him in "another place." This he saw, entering from behind the Throne, and while making his way through a multitude of Privy Councillors in whom there was the wisdom to be early in their places in the space before the Throne. Except one kept vacant for him, a hurried glance round the benches showed not a single empty seat, whilst from the galleries that run round the chamber bright eyes looked down and rained influence upon a Premier who is not only a politician but a courtier.

It is a summer day, and all the hues of a flower-garden are blended in the soft lights of the rainbow which the beauty and rank of the Empire form, and through which, after the storm of the Congress, the sun shines down on the Prime Minister. Royalty is not lacking to the stateliness of the historic scene. If the Premier were to look up he would see in the gallery straight before him the Princess of Wales, fairest among the fair. But he does not look up. He has got over the surprise that awaited him outside, and is satisfied with the glance around which he took when first seating himself on the Ministerial bench. Thereafter he relapsed into his immobile manner, with arms crossed and head held down, the observed of all observers, himself observing none.

A profound silence, broken only by the rustling of fans in the gallery, fell upon the assembly. The Premier had fortunately timed his entry so that all the private business was disposed of, and no consideration of such topics as Vivisection

or the Scotch Roads and Bridges Bill lowered the dignity of the occasion. There was nothing to do but to listen to the eagerly anticipated statement. At this moment an unseen hand flung back one of the painted windows near the roof, and a great beam of white light flashed across the solemn gloom of the chamber, bringing into sudden brilliancy the white lawn of the Bishops, and falling upon the rainbow hues of the group at the lower end of the gallery, just below the Princess of Wales. Salisbury entered, and was greeted with cheers from his friends. As if Beaconsfield were only waiting for the arrival of his companion in the journey to Berlin, he now rose, and, advancing to the table, was received with renewed cheers.

He commenced his speech with a measured cadence. But he maintained this tone only for the first ten minutes, and happily fell into a more natural and effective manner. Beginning by a reference to the Treaty of San Stefano—"our impeachment of which is detailed in the circular of Lord Salisbury"—he proceeded to epitomise the results of the Treaty of Berlin, and to compare them with the earlier instrument. This, as conveying no new information to the House, proved somewhat unentertaining, and was listened to in undisturbed silence. He described in detail the situation of Eastern Roumelia, and next discussed Bosnia, with respect to which he made a statement, perhaps generally new, that it was the Marquis of Salisbury who had proposed to the Congress that Austria should occupy Bosnia and that he was warmly seconded by his fellow-Plenipotentiary. Passing on to argue against the supposition that Turkey had been partitioned—"A country," he said, "may lose a province and not be partitioned"—and having devoted nearly an hour to these considerations, he reached Greece. He spoke rather in sorrow than in anger of the expectations of that country, which he described as being that Congress had met to partition Turkey, and that Greece was to have her share. But he was not without a word of commendation for the Hellenic people.

"Greece," he said, "has a future," and he would say to her, as he would say to an individual under the same circumstances, "Learn to be patient."

The Prime Minister had approached the table without evidence of the possession of notes of the important speech he was about to deliver, and he spoke for the first quarter of

an hour without the assistance of memoranda. Commencing his discussion of the Treaty of Berlin, he produced from the breast-pocket of his coat a small piece of paper, to which he occasionally referred. When, having spoken for an hour and a quarter, his voice began to show signs of huskiness, Redesdale, who was sitting at the table, handed him a glass of water, which he drank. Thus refreshed, and quoting with satisfaction a remark made by Bismarck when the Congress had concluded the re-arrangement of European territory—"Turkey in Europe once more exists"—he invited the House to "go with him to Asia."

As he had studiously and with insistence magnified the gains of Turkey in Europe, so he now minimised the concessions made to Russia in Asia. Kars he dismissed with the remark that it had been thrice taken, and that in the "event of any fresh misunderstanding between Russia and Turkey it would be taken again." As to Batoum, he laughed it to scorn. There was, he said, in the world and in society, a general notion that Batoum was a sort of Portsmouth.

"The fact is," he affirmed in the only passage of his speech where he appealed for laughter, "that the port of Batoum will hold exactly three ships. If they were packed as closely as vessels in the London Docks it might hold six; but with the wind in a certain direction the peril of these ships would be excessive."

These, he added, amidst cheers from the Ministerialists, were not conquests we should grudge to Russia. He next touched on what he called "The Convention of Constantinople," and expressed his surprise to have heard that it had created any feeling of alarm on the part of France—a Power for which, on behalf of England, he professed the profoundest sympathy and regard. The opinion of her Majesty's Ministers was, that the course they had taken would arrest the destruction of Asia Minor. Failing the Convention of Constantinople, Turkey in Asia must yield to anarchy or to Russia. In yielding to Russia in Armenia, England had said to her, "Thus far and no farther." Asia is large enough for both of us. But the room we require we must secure, and the Government, not shrinking from responsibilities ("a Minister who shrinks from responsibility is not a prudent Minister" he had said in an earlier part of his speech), had signed

the Convention of Constantinople and were prepared to carry out its stipulations.

Traces of recent study and of special association were discernible in the Premier's bold use of the words *gendarmarie* and *tapis*, and the deliberate, almost truculent manner in which he pronounced these words suggested that he regarded the occasion as convenient to meet once for all the libel that he was not familiar with the French language. For the rest we were welcoming back a familiar and unchanged acquaintance, whose ordinary manner was ruffled only by a feeling of genuine surprise that people should have thought he had done anything extraordinary, and should gather in multitudes to cry "God bless him." Like the late Mr. Disraeli, Lord Beaconsfield is a plain man, who honestly and unostentatiously performs the duties that lie to his hand, and marvels that men should be greatly moved to recompense him with plaudits.

July 19. — Lord Derby's little joke. Lord Derby, it is said, intends to move that, in recognition of a recent incident in the House of Lords, a familiar proverb shall henceforth be quoted, *Cum grano Salis-bury*.*

CHAPTER XXXII.

MR. GLADSTONE AND THE PREMIER.

The Great Grand-Nephew of his Great Grand-Uncle—A promising young Member—Mr. Gladstone's Pomatum-Pot.

July 23. — The great grand-nephew of his great grand-uncle. Smollett, member for Cambridge, as he is careful to inform the public in *Dod* and elsewhere, "is the great grand-nephew of the celebrated historian and novelist." This is a pity, for had the connection not been established, Smollett might have passed through life without giving offence. Heaven was not bountiful to him in

* The "recent incident" was Lord Salisbury's flat denial of the authenticity of the version of what is known as the Secret Treaty or the Salisbury-Schouvaloff Agreement, the terms of which were prematurely published in the *Globe*, through the agency of Mr. Charles Marvill, a temporary clerk in the Foreign Office.

the bestowal of those qualities which make men great. His mind is, however, of the full average of intelligence, and though he gained no honours at college, he at least had the advantage of a sound education. What he lacks in superior mental acquirements is compensated for by an exceedingly gentle disposition. Kind to a fault, and tender almost to weakness, he would stand aside to let a worm safely cross his path. But the shadow of his great grand-uncle has darkened his life. He has made an admiring study of all that pertains to "the celebrated historian and novelist," and though he himself can neither compile histories nor construct novels, he has found it not impossible by diligent study to imitate what he supposes was the manner of a surgeon's mate of the last century.

The world does not lack information about Tobias Smollett. It was written of him that "his conversation was a string of epigrammatic sarcasms against one or other of the company." As a writer he was what in these days is called "personal," and was before Disraeli in the art of introducing into fiction living personages under thin disguises. Dr. Moore, a contemporary who tells what he knew of the great grand-uncle in the preface to an edition of his works published at the close of the last century, writes:—

"The person of Dr. Smollett was stout and well-proportioned, his countenance engaging, his manner reserved, with a certain air of dignity that seemed to indicate that he was not unconscious of his own powers. He could not conceal his contempt of folly, his detestation of fraud, nor refrain from proclaiming his indignation against every instance of oppression. He was of an intrepid, independent, imprudent disposition, equally incapable of deceit or adulation."

A consideration of this sketch will explain much in the conduct and character of the member for Cambridge. These are not exactly the terms in which a dispassionate observer would describe him, but they are, it may reasonably be supposed, precisely the terms in which he would have himself described. The result is not altogether successful. The great grand-nephew follows the lines on which the great grand-uncle walked. But somehow or other they do not recommend him to his contemporaries, whatever may be their effect upon posterity. Smollett celebrated his return to Parliament in 1874 by a speech in which

he coarsely attacked Gladstone. At that epoch this way of seeking notoriety was not so common as it is now. The merit of the discovery belongs to Harcourt, who was the first to turn upon his old chief. But Smollett, as became the great grand-nephew, went farther than the gentleman whom Gladstone had called up from below the gangway to bestow upon him rank and office.

Smollett's close imitation of the great original has endowed him with a curious Parliamentary manner. By way of showing his disregard for forms, he addresses the House of Commons with one hand in his trousers pockets, while with the other he enforces an occasional objurgation or an excessive rudeness. He holds his head down, and further shows his contempt for his audience by speaking between his half-closed teeth. Thus he flung out his abuse at Gladstone, to the uproarious delight of the Conservatives, who had been long accustomed to the domination of the statesman who now sat in the obscurity of the front Opposition bench.

That speech was a success, and the great grand-nephew began to dream of eclipsing the great grand-uncle. He took an early opportunity of repeating the experiment, selecting Lowe as the next suitable object of attack. But the House did not care for any more, and has cared less and less for Smollett's appearances, till to-night he speaks in the hearing of six members. But it does not become the great grand-nephew to display any vexation at this untoward circumstance, so he stands in his familiar attitude jerking out impertinences and delivering through his teeth commonplaces poorly disguised in strong language.

The "certain air of dignity" which is recorded of the great grand-uncle is absent from the great grand-nephew. But there are not lacking indications that he also "is not unconscious of his own powers." In truth, Smollett's contempt for the capacity of everybody else is equalled only by the strength of his belief in his own omniscience. His egotism would be ludicrous if it were not irritating.

"I had occasion," he said just now, "to take the Governor of Madras to task in March last. I charged him with disloyalty, and I asked for an explanation from the Secretary for India, and as he gave me none I suppose he admits the charge."

No verbatim report will convey a just impression of the

sublime air with which this sentence is delivered. Smollett is quite grave, and absolutely in earnest, as, with a harsh voice and most truculent manner, he reminds the House of Commons that he "had occasion to take the Governor of Madras to task"—he remembers the very month!—"in March last." After he has said this there is an impression that nothing has been left unsaid—except, perhaps, an expression of regret on the part of the audience that an expeditionary force was not at once sent out, with that celerity and completeness which distinguish British military movements in the present day, and that the Duke of Buckingham was not immediately seized and deposited in the lowest dungeon beneath the castle moat. Barry Sullivan's "Off with his head; so much for Buckingham," is a mild expression, alike in respect of sentiment, voice, and manner, as compared with Smollett's "I had occasion to take the Governor of Madras to task."

Since nothing came of that warning, Smollett feels it his duty to repeat it. Accordingly he "takes to task" the Duke of Buckingham and his colleagues in the Government of Madras in the following remark:—"These gentlemen if they are not imbeciles write very much as if they were imbeciles." Here, again, one is conscious of lamentable inability to convey an impression of the voice and manner with which these atrociously offensive words were uttered. Nor was comparison lacking to complete the discomfiture of the Duke of Buckingham. It appears that a Mr. Jones had put forth, in writing on the Vernacular Press controversy, a view contrary to that held by the Duke of Buckingham, and in consonance with Smollett's opinion. Happy Mr. Jones! If he could have only heard tonight the new emphasis with which his not-unfamiliar name was endowed, he would have died content.

"MR. JONES IS RIGHT," said Smollett: and then, after a pause sufficiently prolonged for the House to master all that the affirmation meant, he added—

"I AGREE WITH MR. JONES."

The six gentlemen present did not laugh at this. They were each waiting for an opening to make a speech, and were chiefly concerned with the chance of being the first to catch the Speaker's eye. But once a thrill went through them. Stanhope looked up startled, and the Speaker moved uneasily in his

chair. It happened anent George Balfour. That gentleman had just sent forth one of those plaintive cries of "Hear! hear!" with which he is accustomed to intersperse speeches of gentlemen who discuss India.

"The gallant gentleman cheers," said Smollett, "and I will admit to the fool—"

The appositeness of this remark struck the House, and though it was not strictly Parliamentary, that circumstance would certainly not preclude its utterance from the mouth of Smollett. Balfour looked round to see who was moving in his defence and in vindication of Parliamentary debate. M'Kenna *did* rise to his feet, but it was only a preliminary to taking his hat and leaving the House. Before anybody interposed, Smollett had time to conclude his sentence, which ran thus:—"I will admit to the fool all that has been said about these unjustifiable annexations." Then it was perceived that the misapprehension was due to Smollett's pronunciation of the word "full," and so the storm blew over, and the member for Cambridge, having exhausted his vocabulary of personal abuse, and having settled the affairs of India, concluded his speech and left the House.

He had spoken, and if any other members, including the Under-Secretary for India, were so foolish as to suppose that after that event they could add anything in the way of information, instruction, or counsel, Smollett for one would not encourage them, or waste his time by tarrying to listen.

July 25.—A promising young member.

The Committee is dull this afternoon. The Treasury bench is almost deserted, and Stanhope has the opportunity of lying at full length if he choose, and so sleeping the sleep of satisfied youth. But the Under-Secretary observes decorum and the perpendicular position, and sleeps and dreams with arms folded and chin resting on his chest. He is dreaming that he may some day be Prime Minister, and, surveying the prospect, it must be admitted that the dream is not an idle one. Stanhope had the good fortune to be born the son of an Earl, and of a family that has always sought and found its career amid the clash of politics and affairs. This accidental circumstance started him well in the race. But he has already shown that there is a good deal of running in him. He has made his mark deeper with every speech delivered

in the House of Commons, and most of all by the speech of Tuesday on the Vernacular Press Bill. It is a long time since I heard a speech so rich in promise.

The position was one full of peculiar difficulty. Gladstone had brought forward a real grievance affecting critical issues, and had urged his case in a speech of rare acceptability to the House of Commons. Stanhope was only the other day appointed to the India Office, and his acquaintance with the subject-matter must necessarily have been hastily acquired. He was speaking at the conclusion of a tiresome debate which had occupied several hours of a sultry night. Yet, as Stafford Northcote generously said when he came to wind up the debate, his speech left little for any other Minister to say. It was full of debating power; its language was felicitous, and its manner—a consideration scarcely less important than matter in an assembly like the House of Commons—was unimpeachable.

Stanhope has neither the fussiness of self-conceit nor the awkwardness of diffidence. He takes care to know what he is talking about, and having the information, he retails it in an easy, pleasant, and unembarrassed manner. The only fault that might be suggested (and when perfection is so nearly attained it is worth while to pay attention to anything that mars the whole) is that he is apt to fall into a sing-song tone suggestive of recitation. Apart from this, his Parliamentary manner leaves nothing to be desired except, perhaps, a lightness of touch which may come with added experience. Many young men try to be smart at the outset. Stanhope, avoiding this unpardonable offence, errs slightly on the side of sobriety. But for this and much else he is to be commended. At an unusually early age he has made his mark in the House of Commons, not in that brilliant style in which young men sometimes flash forth and then disappear in everlasting darkness, but in a quiet, masterly manner which justifies the hope of a distinguished future. He may sit and dream on the lower end of the Treasury bench. He will move higher up before many years have passed over his head.

July 31. — Mr.
Gladstone's po-
matum-pot.

Never during the existence of the present Parliament has Gladstone been able to observe in the use of his pomatum-pot a measure of deliberation equal to that displayed to-night. This mysterious

vessel, which exercises a modest but important influence upon our principal Parliamentary debates, is brought into the House only upon great occasions. It is of glass, oval in shape, two and a half inches high, and closed with a cork with a wooden top. These details may appear minute. But I dwell upon them for the sufficient reason that I cannot further describe the contents than to say they resemble a preparation for the hair as it might look in sultry weather. Members who aspire to oratorical success have wasted much valuable time in the endeavour to ascertain the precise qualities of the substance with which Gladstone lubricates his vocal organs during the delivery of his orations. There are some conscientious Conservatives who believe it is obtained by boiling down a healthy infant selected from the bosom of the family of a Conservative elector. But this is evidently the outcome of prejudice, and of an inclination to believe anything bad of Gladstone. Whatever the bottle contains, it is carefully brought into the House and cautiously deposited on a corner of the table where it is likely to be free from the sweep of the orator's arm. Thence at convenient intervals it is produced, and Imperial Parliament looks on in wonder as Gladstone, putting the stout neck of the ungainly bottle to his lips, draws in the nourishment, and starts again like a giant refreshed; but not before he has carefully corked up the bottle and replaced it in a situation of security on the table.

It is evident that, for the due and comfortable enjoyment of this process, an appreciable interval in the toil of speaking is required. There was a time, though not in the memory of members of the present Parliament, when Gladstone might not only have found time during the delivery of his speeches to absorb this pomatonic substance, but might, if he pleased, have carved the wing of a chicken to eat with it. In the last Parliament the flow of his eloquence was wont to be interrupted by whirlwinds of applause, during which he might gain temporary rest or take temporary refreshment. All that has changed with the new Parliament, and time after time Gladstone has poured his eloquence into dull ears, and has made a long speech unbroken by a cheer.

The last time we had the pomatum-pot with us the subject of debate was the everlasting Eastern Question. But the circumstances were different. At that epoch Russia and Turkey held each other by the throat, and the other nations of Europe

were standing with their hands on the hilts of their swords. Many in the House of Commons, without going the full length of attachment to Turkey and hatred of Russia, were fearful lest the appearance of divided counsels in England might encourage Russia to proceed to extremities, and so finally drag us into war. It seemed if not nobler, at least safer, to be silent, and Gladstone, with his inconvenient impulses, and his unrestrained advocacy of what he held to be right, seemed to peril peace. So whilst the Conservatives hooted him, the Opposition refrained from cheering him, and his recourse to the pomatum-pot was a hastily-snatched joy, chilled by the silence and embarrassed by the curious scrutiny of the House.

To-night all this was changed. Peace has been signed; the Eastern Question is temporarily, at least, settled, and nothing that Gladstone says or does can reopen the controversy. Members might give themselves up to the untrammelled pleasure of listening to matchless eloquence, and to arguments subtly conceived and vigorously enforced. No man by cheering could help in the slightest degree to precipitate war. Gladstone was saying now what he had said months ago, when only Mundella and a few faithful members below the gangway cheered him. He was unaltered, but circumstances had changed, and so had the attitude of the Opposition. Accordingly the speaker was sustained and cheered by a constant cannonade of applause, and frequent irruptions of approving laughter. It seemed that the hand of Time had put back the clock, and that the Gladstone of 1870 was once more swaying the passions and moulding the convictions of a subdued House of Commons. Of an oration that lasted two hours and thirty-five minutes it is probable that Gladstone was speaking for only two hours and fifteen minutes. The Opposition, in a voice of unwonted unison, filled up the other twenty minutes with cheering, an arrangement which gave Gladstone so much time for application to the pomatum-pot that his sustenance was exhausted before his speech was concluded. It was in Berlin, within the precincts of the Radziwill Palace, that he first found the opportunity of refreshing himself. He had a good drink in Bulgaria; he supped heartily in Greece; he nearly finished the bottle in Cyprus; and when he found himself in Asia Minor the most determined suction failed in adequate result.

His speech of to-night will rank as one of the four greatest delivered by him within the walls of the House of Commons. To many, still resting under the spell of its eloquence, and amazed at the firm yet light grasp of detail, and the surpassing method in which details were arranged and displayed, it seems impossible that even Gladstone could ever have excelled this feat. The speech was dangerously long, and I am not sure whether it would not have been better if the odd thirty-five minutes had been dispensed with. Yet, in reviewing it, it is difficult to say what particular passages might have been left out. He had provided himself with voluminous notes, but a fatal economy in stationery led to what might have proved a disastrous result. His memoranda were made on the backs of letters of all sizes and shapes. To keep them in consecutive order was an undertaking which required absorbing attention, and more than once he had to shuffle his notes as if he were playing a card trick and had lost the clue.

The result of this was that at one time, just upon the close of the speech, he had shuffled to the top a page he had already used. The catch-line of the note was the sentence, "But if foreign Governments have to complain of this policy, how much greater cause has Parliament?" This had reference to the secret agreement with Russia, and had been dealt with in its proper place. Coming up again, Gladstone had pronounced the sentence before he discovered his error, and recognising at a glance the hopelessness of the endeavour to find the proper sequence of the notes, he made the best of the matter. But for some moments it paralysed him, and he floundered as a vessel halts and staggers before she stands away on a fresh tack.

This was near the end, and many who had not observed the accident naturally concluded that Gladstone was growing physically tired. The task was one that might well have wearied a younger man. But the fact is Gladstone was to all appearances as fresh when he had finished as when he began. Throughout the whole space of time he was almost gymnastically vigorous. He has of late acquired—or, rather, has developed—an evil habit of driving home his arguments by smiting with his hand any resonant substance that may

be near. Sometimes he stands a pace backward from the table, and with all his might beats one hand upon the other through a succession of several moments. More often he, with resounding blows, assaults some particular book on the table, a Blue Book by preference, as affording a substance which combines a certain degree of flexibility with a full capacity of resonance.

For higher flights, and for clenching important arguments, he carefully reserves a large black box that stands in the middle of the table. To reach this requires a considerable effort, a stretching of the body across the table. But Gladstone is not to be denied from time to time the rapturous delight of beating that box. With concentrated rage, with flashing eyes, with dilated frame that trembles in every nerve, and with an absolute disregard of personal pain, he leans across and brings down his hand with tremendous force on the lid of the inoffensive and astounded box. The effect is essentially ridiculous and distinctly unpleasant. It distracts the attention from the arguments to which the orator particularly desires to draw attention, and breaks with discordant sounds the melody of a rich, full voice. No one more quickly than Gladstone would recognise these facts, and their not unimportant bearing upon the object he has at heart. But it would be idle to hope for reformation. He might at the outset of a speech forswear the box and abjure the Blue Books. But his eloquence reaches the rare heights of passion. In the moments of his frenzy he loses all sight of material things, and though to-night his hand cannot fail to be wounded, he would be honestly surprised if he were told how the uncomfortable feeling had been brought about.

Incidentally he referred to the Premier's personal attack upon him at the great Conservative meeting held on Saturday in the Duke of Wellington's riding-school. Beaconsfield then denounced him as "a sophisticated rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity," and went on to describe him as one "gifted with an egotistical imagination that can at all times command an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign his opponents and glorify himself." Twenty-four hours ago, Gladstone said, he had no intention of alluding "to this repulsive subject."

But reference having been made to it by Plunket, and it having formed the subject of discussion in the House of Lords on the previous night, he had felt bound to write a letter to Lord Beaconsfield, which he read amid profound silence, broken by an isolated laugh from the Conservative side at the terms in which he addressed his rival.

The letter, which began "Dear Lord Beaconsfield," called the Prime Minister's attention to the fact that he was reported to have stated that Gladstone, in his speech at Oxford, had described him as "a dangerous and even devilish character." Further, that he had "indulged in criticisms replete with the most offensive epithets as to Lord Beaconsfield's conduct and in description of his character." He asked the noble lord to have the goodness to supply him with a list or selection of the offensive epithets, and he remained, "my dear lord, faithfully yours, W. E. Gladstone."

Gladstone said he had not yet received an answer to his letter, but if when it came it furnished him with the information he required, there would remain nothing for him but to apologise.*

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A HOLLOW SESSION.

The Major once more—Quite a new Subject—The Major backslides—Last Hours of the Session—Prorogation.

Aug. 7. — The Major once more. The scene last night was not wanting in dramatic accessories. The House had spent a most prosaic evening, discussing Ways and Means. Only a few members had been able to outlive the exercise, and these were men inured to war, old campaigners, who settled down before the Army Estimates with that fierce and insatiable delight with which My Uncle Toby was accustomed to seat him-

* Lord Beaconsfield replied to the effect that he had instructed one of his secretaries to hunt up the references. Apparently the hunt proved unsuccessful, for nothing more was heard of the matter.

self at the table on which he might show how Namur was besieged. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had retired in favour of the Minister of War; the Colonels were thrown out in skirmishing order; everything was ready for the good old-fashioned military parade. When suddenly, from the right flank of the Secretary for War, fire was opened from an unexpected though not unfamiliar quarter.

The Major's "Hear, hear," on ordinary occasions, is like the discharge of an Armstrong gun. Heard amidst a burst of cheering, it dominates all other sounds. Trumpeted forth by itself at untimely seasons, it fills the House with a noise equal to the cheering of an average Continental crowd. That something was the matter with the Major was evident; what it might be few knew, though many guessed—erroneously, I am told. It was not whisky. It was outraged family pride. A scion of the O'Gorman family had been unjustly passed over when the Horse Guards were dealing out promotions, and it accordingly occurred to the mind of the Major that the best way of showing his displeasure with the Horse Guards would be to sit in his place in the House of Commons and thunder forth untimely "hear, hears!" when the Secretary for War was making a statement with respect to the cost of the Reserves and of the Expeditionary Force to Cyprus.

This programme he carried out with much vigour and unqualified success. Stanley bore up bravely against the interruption. But at length the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is always being goaded by untoward circumstances into some unwelcome exhibition of energy, arose and called the Speaker's attention to the interruptions. Then followed a scene in which the Major stormed, the House grew excited, the Chancellor of the Exchequer grew pale, and John Manners discreetly quitted the premises, probably going in search of that weapon of war—that decorated brand of steel—which he flashed in the eyes of Europe just before the Congress. Finally, after some bustle, that awfully mysterious process known as "naming" a member was carried out, a process which the Major submitted to silently, and with no other show of emotion than a volcanic heaving of his stupendous frame, and the ferocious snapping at imaginary flies that seemed to him to live in his moustache. But when the Chancellor of the Exchequer, rising next, alluded to this

"naming" as "a solemn duty," the Major indicated what he thought of it by the monosyllable "Bah!"

A resolution declaring the Major's conduct to be disorderly and disrespectful being before the House, evidently the next thing to do was to get rid of the Major. How that was to be accomplished was a matter of serious embarrassment. It is a long-established custom that the member whose conduct is under discussion shall leave the House. Would the Major leave? and, if not, how was he to be got out? The Serjeant-at-Arms would be called upon to do his duty; but though Captain Gosset is a powerful and determined man, what would he be among so many square feet of humanity? All eyes were turned towards the Major in anxious expectation. Nobody liked to propound the question. But it was in everybody's mind. Would he walk out, or would he have to be carried out, and if so, who was to carry him? Harcourt looked on with a grim smile, pleased for once in his life that he was not in office. Whoever might have to carry out the Major, it certainly would not be Her Majesty's Opposition.

Her Majesty's Postmaster-General had solved the difficulty as far as he was concerned, not yet having returned with the sword. At the end of an exhausting Session it seemed too much that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should be called upon to assist at an athletic performance of this magnitude. Lowther, who would have regarded the task as a pleasant interlude in the sameness of official duties, was unfortunately absent. Colonel Stanley might be depended upon for at least a leg, and Selwin-Ibbetson, though he has made a little flesh lately and shows the results of close attention to Parliamentary duties, buttoned his coat tightly across his chest, and was evidently prepared to answer for an arm. The Admiral also, though getting on in years, might be counted upon to assist Her Majesty's Government in this predicament, and with volunteers from other parts of the House it might be done if the Major remained in his place. But what if he lay down on the floor and, as from his appearance at the moment he appeared quite capable of doing, refused to budge?

These thoughts occupied men's minds, and under the tone of authority with which the Chancellor of the Exchequer and others spoke, there too evidently lurked this fear of the Major

resorting to extremities. Whilst hon. and right hon. gentlemen watched and trembled, the gigantic form below the gangway slowly rose, and, facing the Speaker, marched up the gangway. A new terror possessed the House. Where was the Major going, and what was he going to do? The Mace lay on the table. Supposing he were to walk down and, taking that dread instrument between his finger and thumb, whirl it round his head shillelagh-wise, or even whisk it about the ears of Her Majesty's Minister for War! Stout hearts quailed; ruddy cheeks blanched; brave men held their breath as the Major, turning at the corner of the seat, walked with slow, majestic step down the gangway. Arrived on the floor, he turned towards the Speaker, and, with a low bow, faced about and sailed towards the door, presenting an expanse of back which, to the disordered imagination, seemed to fill up the space bridging the Conservative and Liberal benches. A sigh of relief that sounded half like a cheer broke forth, and, the principal difficulty got rid of, the House, with a vivacity that appeared almost truculent compared with its former tone, formally passed a resolution declaring the conduct of the Major both disorderly and disrespectful.

This scene was not lacking in dramatic incident. But for breathless interest, deep solemnity, and true pathos, it must yield the palm to the scene this afternoon. The House, having met as usual, proceeded to the consideration of the ordinary business on the paper. Hon. members talked about tithes, the Permissive Bill, the Russians, Afghanistan, or prison discipline; but it was evident their thoughts were elsewhere. The Major was to come up to-day, and every one was thinking of what he might say, and how he would say it. Would he raise his arm and defy the House, or would he bow his neck and seek its forgiveness?

The first order of the day was thus worded:—"Major O'Gorman—Consideration of his conduct towards the Chair." The second order of the day was:—"Major O'Gorman—To attend in his place." Never before had a member two whole orders of the day assigned to him, and a flush of pride suffused the countenance of O'Sullivan as he thought of this, and pleaded that before the conduct of his great countryman was considered, he should be allowed an opportunity of explaining it.

It being settled that the Major should be brought in, the Serjeant-at-Arms was despatched to fetch him. A dead silence reigned in the House. All eyes were fixed upon the closed doors. Presently they were flung back, and momentarily framed between them was seen the gigantic figure of the Major. With hat in hand, and for the defiant air of the previous night a downcast look of penitence that almost brought tears into the eyes of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Major walked in. Solemn silence reigned as, bowing with stately grace to the Chair, he took his seat.

"Major O'Gorman," said the Speaker.

The Major rose, and, fixing his glasses, read in a voice tremulous with emotion the expression of his deep regret for the outburst of the previous night, and his apology for his conduct on that occasion. It was an affecting scene—a truly touching episode. The Major reading with difficulty through his dimmed glasses; the Chancellor of the Exchequer resisting with evident difficulty the impulse to go and throw himself on the returned prodigal's neck; and the House, generally, sitting with solemn aspect, as if it were attending a funeral service. But the apology tendered and accepted, and all the formalities gone through, no further bounds were laid upon emotion. The Major was cheered as if he had saved the State instead of having bullied the House of Commons. Everybody, more particularly the Chancellor of the Exchequer, felt personally grateful to him for having relieved the House from an awkward predicament. Friends and members were invited to rejoice, because the prodigal had returned. The fatted calf was killed, and there was more joy in the House over the Major's return than at the presence of the ninety-and-nine well-conducted gentlemen, who would rather have bitten their tongue out than have permitted it to utter the monosyllable "Bah!" when the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke respectfully of the solemn action of the Speaker.

Aug. 8.—Quite a new subject. Nobody but Fawcett—unless it were Edward Jenkins—would think of serving up the Eastern Question to-night. Seven long months we have had the Eastern Question with us, morning, noon, and night. We have breakfasted off it, lunched off it, had five o'clock tea off it, dined off

it, gone to bed with it, and waked up in the morning with it, and a headache. It might have been thought that at last we were done with it. But here is Fawcett, with provoking tirelessness, describing the subject *ab ovo*—discoursing on the matter as if it were a new planet, a new sauce, or a new continent, just discovered, and with respect to which everybody was eager to know all that might be told. The House is almost empty, and altogether wearied. Not a single man, not even Roebuck, is sitting on the front Opposition bench. There are broad gaps in the benches above and below the gangway. Save Bourke—whose high-water mark of desperation is indicated by the lavish display of his handkerchief—none of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's colleagues bear him company in this last infliction.

The only man in the House, except Fawcett, who shows any signs of animation is Edward Jenkins, who, having disposed himself in an easy position in the seat consecrated to the convenience of Rylands, is listening with a judicial air, and encouraging his friend by an occasional cry of "Hear! hear!" Jenkins was not, at the outset, able to view Fawcett's action with full satisfaction. He has himself, as is known throughout all the continents, given notice of his intention on the second reading of the Appropriation Bill to "review the policy of Her Majesty's Government." Whether Fawcett was not trenching on his particular ground was for the moment a matter of grave consideration. But great minds are always generous, and if Fawcett *would* venture in the turgid waters in which Jenkins had announced his intention presently to swim, his temerity was to be regretted. Still, common humanity demanded that a helping hand should be stretched out to him. So Jenkins stretches out the hand, and when Fawcett has made an end of speaking, he rises and says a few words demonstrating the hopeless incapacity of the Government in the presence of the one man who could civilise Cyprus and ameliorate Asia Minor.

It is hard lines for Stafford Northcote that he must needs, in an empty House, discuss the Eastern Question with Edward Jenkins. But the end is not far off. There are within sight, and almost within reach, the umbrageous trees, the fern-filled lanes, the broad cool river, and the quietness of the home in

Devonshire. The weary Minister thinks of these as he gallantly puts his shoulders once more to the well-worn wheel, and says over again all the nothingnesses about Russia, Turkey, the Mediterranean, my Noble Friend, and our Indian Empire. So the subject drops, and Henry Thynne, who in a provoking manner preserves his freshness in this weary time, stands on guard at the lobby door, and waylays Ministerialists who affect to think that the business of the night is over, and that they may now go home. On this head the Whip suavely but firmly undeceives them; and, with a mild look of surprise, they hear that all this talk is but the preliminary to real business, which will begin about one o'clock in the morning, when, with eyes half-closed and ears dulled with the strain of an unnaturally prolonged Session, we shall vote money by the million for the use of Her Majesty's Ministers.

Aug. 9.—The Ma- The Major's penitence did not last much over
jor backslides. twenty-four hours. About three o'clock this morning he unexpectedly turned up, and, taking his seat, lost no time in making his presence known. The immediate business before the House was the Report on Supply, and as the successive votes were put the Major negatived them. As he persisted in his opposition, the Speaker was of course bound to clear the House for a division. But when this was done it was discovered that the Major had no one to "tell" with him. When challenged on this point he named Dr. O'Leary. But he dared the Major's displeasure by declining to work with him. When the next vote was put the Major again roared "No!" and, asked for a co-teller, was unable to name him. This he did four times, causing some considerable delay in what is usually purely formal business. At length the Speaker, with some asperity in his tone, pointed out the inconvenience of the procedure, and the Major went to sleep.

Aug. 15. — Last It was thought that by meeting at three o'clock
hours of the this afternoon, the business on the paper, which
Session. was purely formal, might be got through by five. But the bad quarters of an hour have slipped on, it is now a quarter to eight, and Courtney is still wearisomely traversing the Transvaal. Stafford Northcote has gone away, having taken his

share in the earlier part of the afternoon. To him succeeded W. H. Smith, kept on duty by the fact that Lord Charles Beresford had a notice on the paper with respect to the *Eurydice*. But this also is over, and Courtney is trudging through the Transvaal with a courage worthy of a more interesting cause, and with an erudition that merits a larger audience. Hicks-Beach has the Treasury bench all to himself, and is meditating on the mysterious ways of Providence which at first led him to do battle with the Irish members, and have now landed him in the toils of the peculiar and distinct class of legislators who take the colonies under their protecting wing. On the bench behind—the fullest of the House—sit four members. At the corner is Marten, who has not had such a successful Session as he had hoped, and whose frequent offers to assist the Government in dilemmas have been snubbed by peremptory William Dyke. Next to him is Wheelhouse, sitting in the seat of the strangely-absent Admiral.

The third is breezy Charles Beresford, who has just been having a little chat with the House, and thinks he has made clear to its comprehension the difference between a hawser and a harbour. But he is disturbed by doubts as to whether the First Lord of the Admiralty quite understood his explanation of the elaborate process of jib-booming your mainstay, and hauling on your bow-line, when you approach on the weather-bow a vessel whose headlines are athwart the keelson on the maindeck. Next to the youthful lord, and also in profound meditation, is Alderman Cotton, late Lord Mayor of London, who has, truly, something to think about in consideration of the slights to which he has been inexplicably and capriciously subjected by a Government not niggardly in the distribution of honours. On the front bench below the gangway is Colonel Arbuthnot, and the back bench in the same part of the House is peopled by Mellor.

This is the full tale of the Conservative Party who turn a deaf ear to Courtney's interesting essay. The Opposition benches are by comparison crowded. It is true the leaders have fled. But their concentrated talking power is adequately represented by George Balfour, who has taken Hartington's place, and is diligently studying a volume of Hansard. At the corner bench behind is Muntz, a man who rarely opens his mouth in the House, but who, when he speaks, has always

something sensible to say. On his right is Henry Havelock, and beyond him Kenealy, who has just furnished the House with a contrast between the frank, sailor-like manner of Beresford, and the happily unique way of looking at things possible to the member for Stoke. On the bench behind is Arthur Moore, one of the few cheerful men in the House. Moore has long had on hand (or rather in manuscript) a speech about Irish paupers. Opportunity after opportunity has slipped by, and he has not found the desired opening. But this afternoon he had the House on the hip. Speaking on the question of the adjournment he was sure, if not of a hearing, at least of time for reading his speech. Till that turn came he sat with manuscript in hand in a condition of almost pitiable nervousness. Under ordinary circumstances he was quite safe. But who could say what might not happen? The glass roof might fall in; the main sewers might burst; the Speaker, worn to the point of death by the long Session, might declare that he could not remain another moment; the Major might return and do something desperate—all sorts of things might happen, and the cherished speech (probably already in type in the Dublin journals) might miss fire. It was a dreadful time. But it ended happily, and Moore now feels that he has illumined the last hours of the dying Session with the graces of native, though unaccustomed, oratory.

Below the gangway Dillwyn sits in the celebrated corner-seat, with legs crossed and body luxuriously reclining, drinking in to the full the joys that next week will be impossible. Below him is Locke, who pathetically sits out these last hours, not certain that Lord Beaconsfield has not another surprise in store and that this may not be his last appearance in an assembly in which for so many years he has been a familiar figure. In the corner-seat is Fawcett, whom Hicks-Beach uneasily watches, fearful lest he should follow Courtney, and wander through any of the by-paths of the Transvaal which that indomitable gentleman shall have left unexplored. In the corner-seat behind him Whitwell sweetly though feebly smiles into the familiar depths of nothingness. Below Courtney sits Delahunty, with his hat rakishly set on one side, and his faithful black bag, containing the mysteries of a month's wardrobe, within reach of his hand.

Monk is making the most of the absence of Sir Thomas

Bazley, and gently purrs in the corner-seat, the reversion of which is among his most cherished hopes. Far away, under the shadow of the Serjeant-at-Arms' chair, sits O'Leary, who in the perspective takes strange proportions, and to the disordered imagination looks like a Member of Parliament seen through the broad end of a telescope. These comprise the audience to which Courtney unfolds all the wrongs of the Transvaal, and, regardless of the obvious inattention and the growing impatience, spares not a sentence of his essay and diminishes not a page of the quotations he intended to read.

Behind Parliament is Posterity, and men of great minds having a message to deliver can afford to disregard the petty impatience of a score of gentlemen who want their dinner.

Aug. 16.—Prorogation. "In quires and places where they sing, here followeth the anthem." Let us sing the *Te Deum*; for the longest, if not the weariest, Session Parliament has known for many years is over. I stop short of saying *the* weariest, because all Sessions seem weary when looked back upon from the middle of August, and we are always inclined to exaggerate our most recent tribulation. But surely the Session has been more than usually wearisome, for a reason which may be stated, and will be readily understood. There has been no reality about the contests that have from time to time arisen. There have been a succession of sham-fights, but there has been lacking the absorbing interest of real warfare. Drums have been beaten, forces have been marshalled, banners have been unfurled, and the Duke of York having marched his men up the hill, has marched them back again. The Opposition, torn by dissension, disheartened by the certainty of defeat, cautiously led in one direction by Hartington, and passionately entreated by Gladstone to follow in another, has played the Pantaloon's part in the comic business, and has stood up only to be knocked down.

The best debate of the Session was on the preliminary stages of the Cattle Bill, and that pre-eminence was maintained to the last stage. The case was one with which neither Party nor leaders of Party had anything to do. Practical men, thoroughly acquainted with the subject, and taking diverse views of it according to the interest they represented, fought stoutly for or against the Bill; and in the end the best men won. But, apart

from this, there has been no fighting worthy the fame of the House and the ability of its members. There is no assembly in the world more quick to detect and more ready to resent shams than the House of Commons. All our big fights have been shams in the sense indicated, and there has consequently been lacking throughout successive months the fervour of real warfare. The assertion that an assembly takes its tone from its leader has been abundantly proved. With exceptional orations from Gladstone, the debates of the House of Commons have risen just to the level of Stafford Northcote—that is to say, they have been painstaking, well-informed, exhaustive, and exhausting.

But it is all over now; and a fitting conclusion was arrived at in the House of Lords this afternoon, where five estimable Peers masqueraded in red cloaks and cocked hats, and the monotonous voice of the clerk repeated the fifty-fold "*La reyne le veult.*"

SESSION 1879.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MR. GLADSTONE ON THE OFFENSIVE.

The County Franchise—Mr. Lowe's Foreboding—Jenkins at Bay—A Vote of Censure in the Lords—Mr. Lowe's Breakdown—Sir William Harcourt "fustigates" Mr. Dodson—Mr. Gladstone indicts the Financial Policy of the Government.

Mar. 4. — The County Franchise. At five o'clock Trevelyan rose to move the first of his resolutions on the county franchise, which affirms the desirability of establishing throughout the United Kingdom a household franchise similar to that now existing in the English boroughs. Trevelyan referred at some length to the procedure in connection with the creation of faggot votes in Midlothian, and caused some merriment by reading the names of the newly-created electors, two of whom are sons of the Duke of Abercorn. Of one voter, "Mr. Edward Stanley Hope, barrister-at-law," Trevelyan observed that it was a curious coincidence that this gentleman's investment of £150 on a faggot vote in Midlothian was immediately followed by his appointment to a Charity Commissionership of the value of £1,200 a year. This remark being hailed with ironical cheers from the other side, Trevelyan said the longer he was in public life the more he was astonished at the different views different people entertained of what was becoming. This being again cheered by Conservatives, Trevelyan said he accepted those cheers as an expression of the view that there were very few barristers-at-law who would like to see their names in the same paper as having become the possessors of a faggot vote and a lucrative situation. A member opposite audibly and irregularly observed that he thought there were a good many who would like it. Quoting from a speech by the Premier, Trevelyan said he agreed in the axiom that Parliament should be the ultimate

resort of appeal on questions of peace or war. But it was a sin and a shame that decisions on such points should be given in a Parliament in the election of which two-fifths of the householders of Great Britain had taken no part.

Dilke seconded the motion, and Claud Hamilton, in a lively speech, moved an amendment, to the effect that it is inexpedient to reopen the question of Parliamentary reform at the present time. It was, he declared, a monstrous libel upon the county members to say that the labourers were not represented in the House—an assertion emphatically made, and received with loud laughter from the other side. The laughter was renewed when Lord Claud, referring to the fact charged by Trevelyan that two of his brothers had been created faggot voters in Midlothian, stated that his father possessed considerable property in the county, and being a peer could not vote on elections for that House.

“Are the three thousand a year to go unrepresented?” he asked in a loud voice, and was answered in the negative by uproarious cheers from the Conservative benches.

“Why, sir,” he added, “such a question is perfectly ridiculous,” whereat, and at the indignant manner of the protestation, the Opposition laughed again.

But the laughter became general when Lord Claud, “going into the question of faggot voting,” as he said, unearthed a speech of Cobden’s, in which he contended that that gentleman had approved and recommended faggot voting in connection with the Corn Law agitation. In conclusion, Lord Claud declared that the true object of these resolutions was to “upset and subvert the whole fabric of our Constitution, and to trample under foot the glorious traditions of the House of Commons.”

When he resumed his seat, Lowe rose from the opposite side, and at the same time Sir Charles Legard presented himself to second the amendment. There were loud cries for Lowe, but Legard refused to give way, and it appearing that Lowe’s speech would be postponed till after dinner, the House quickly emptied. Some lingered in expectation that he might yet follow Legard. As he showed no sign, the exodus was completed, and Osborne Morgan addressed a House consisting of eight members. Of these General Shute sat for the rank and file of the Conservative party, whilst Ministers were repre-

sented by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Postmaster-General. The only gentleman on the front Opposition bench was Bright, who had just come in, and behind were five other members, including Osborne Morgan. In this condition, with slight variation, the House remained till nearly ten o'clock. Half an hour later the benches had filled again, among the first arrivals being Gladstone.

Mr. Lowe's Fore-
boding. Lowe's rising, at twenty minutes to eleven, was the signal for the crowding of all the benches, and the filling up of the gallery to the right of the Speaker. He was unusually brief, concluding his speech within the space of twenty minutes. He was also unusually serious, and if the audience had assembled in the expectation of being amused by flashes of wit or sallies of humour they were disappointed. Lowe was evidently impressed with the singularity of his position when rising from a seat between Bright and Gladstone to ask the House of Commons to declare that the question of Parliamentary reform was for ever closed. In earnest tones, and with a persuasive manner quite foreign to his Parliamentary habit, he asked the House to consider that what they had to think of was, not what would be pleasant to a section of the populace, but what was for the good of the nation throughout ages to come. The step they were now invited to take must inevitably lead to a further lowering of the franchise and of the standard by which members of that House were elected. In former times the Sovereign had been an active power in the Constitution; within his own recollection the House of Lords had claimed at least equal power with the House of Commons. To-day the Constitution had been reduced to a state of tremendous simplicity. All power was centred in the House of Commons, and the question was, what effect would a further lowering of the franchise have upon the House of Commons? At best, the advantage could not be great; at worst—Lowe did not set forth the antithesis in detail.

Blennerhasset urged at some length the right of the representation of minorities, and Courtney opposed the motion as strongly as Lowe, though on other grounds. He held that if the franchise were extended in the direction suggested by

the resolution it would be inoperative in the way of securing the representation of the agricultural labourer; and incidentally showed how on various occasions since the session of 1877—notably in respect of the annexation of the Transvaal—the House of Commons had erred, whilst only a single individual (unnamed from motives of modesty) had raised his voice to indicate the right way, and he had been disregarded.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer followed (it being now half-past twelve), and, accepting “the grave, the solemn, the statesmanlike warning” of Lowe, opposed the resolution. Hartington having briefly spoken in support of the resolution, the House divided, and the amendment was carried by 291 votes against 226.

Mar. 14.—Jenkins at bay. Parliament was to-day disturbed from the level flow of its proceedings by a stormy scene. It had reference to affairs in Zululand, and in some degree both Houses shared in the unwonted excitement. In the Lords there was a little passage of arms between Thurlow—who made an inquiry into the constitution of the court-martial appointed by Chelmsford with respect to the affair at Isandula—and one or two lords, who saw in the question a covert attack on the character of British officers. This, however, was speedily disposed of, and their lordships adjourned after something less than an hour’s sitting.

It was in the Commons that the storm burst with overpowering and prolonged violence. The subject of the Zulu war was first broached in a question from A. M. Sullivan, who wanted to know whether an attempt might not be made to settle the quarrel with Cetewayo by peaceful means. Hicks-Beach, amid loud cheers from the Ministerialists, said it was, among other reasons, necessary for the safety of the white races of the colony that the military disaster should be retrieved.

Then the scene was quietly led up to by Jenkins asking a question designed to ascertain whether it was the intention of the Government to recall Chelmsford.

“No, sir,” said the Chancellor of the Exchequer. “As at present advised, we have no such intention.”

Amid the loud cheers with which this reply was greeted from the Ministerial benches, Jenkins rose and announced that

he "had to ask the indulgence of the House whilst he made a few remarks;" and that, with a view to putting himself in order, he should move the adjournment. This intention was deprecated with angry cries from the opposite side, but Jenkins nevertheless proceeded to offer his "few remarks." What their purport might be it was impossible to gather. Each time he raised his voice to commence a sentence the sound was drowned in a roar of cries for a division. The Speaker, being appealed to on a point of order, said Jenkins was within his right in moving the adjournment, but at the same time he thought it his duty to point out that the course he was taking was highly inconvenient. If he desired to debate the subject of Lord Chelmsford's command, the proper way to bring it forward would be as an amendment on going into Committee of Supply.

Jenkins, again rising, was met with cries of "Withdraw," which came from both sides of the House. In a moment of calm he was heard to address those in his immediate neighbourhood to the effect that as he had not asked their advice he begged that they would not favour him with it. He was then understood to resume the thread of his discourse, as before, accompanied by persistent shouting, through which might now and then be heard the shrill cry of "Hear, hear!" with which Biggar encouraged the hon. member.

After this had gone on for some time, Colonel Mure rose and asked whether it was respectful to the Speaker, after the expression of opinion given by him, that Jenkins should continue. Jenkins made the most of the pause of expectation which followed to articulate a connected sentence, in which he deprecated Mure's interference. As the Speaker did not rise, the shouting for the division continued. It was changed to a howl of despair when from the ledge of the bench before him Jenkins produced a blue-book and a bundle of notes.

A little later, Jenkins's apparently mute gesticulations and the cry of "'Vide, 'vide, 'vide" having meanwhile proceeded without intermission, Sir John Hay rose to order, and asked whether, after the intimation of the Colonial Secretary, Jenkins was in order in discussing affairs in South Africa. The Speaker said no doubt it would be more convenient if Jenkins would defer his remarks, whereat the House cheered. "At the same time," he added, "if he thinks it right, after the

observation I have made, to proceed, he is within his right in doing so," a ruling much cheered by Biggar. Jenkins again rose, and proceeded as before, amid cries of "Withdraw." These suddenly changed to a loud shout of laughter when Biggar was discovered standing up signalling with extended hat to Jenkins to sit down, whilst he addressed the Speaker. What Biggar wanted to know was, whether it was in order that members opposite should persist in crying "Divide, divide." The Speaker ruled generally that all interruption was out of order, and once more Jenkins appeared, and was understood to go on where he had stopped.

The habitual deference of the majority of the House to the ruling of the Speaker led to an intermission of the cries of "Divide!" And now there arose up from the crowded Ministerial benches a wailing sound, rising and falling like the winter wind rushing through the bare boughs of forest trees. This was not less effective in preventing Jenkins from being heard beyond a few interjectional remarks. Once he turned towards the benches above the gangway on the Opposition side, and made a complaint to the Speaker that he was being "interrupted by the hon. Member for Hastings." The idea of Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth being held up for reproof as a disorderly member seemed greatly to tickle the fancy of the House, and there followed a roar of laughter which lasted for several moments.

Jenkins continuing—always with the thundrous chorus from the Ministerial benches—was next called to order by Joseph Cowen, who asked the Speaker whether it was competent for a member under cover of a motion for adjournment to discuss a question with respect to which a resolution was already on the paper. The Speaker excused himself from giving a definite ruling, on the ground that the observations of the hon. member had not reached him.

"I perfectly understand the rules of debate," said Jenkins, "and with respect to the remarks of the hon. member I can only say——."

What he said was lost in the roar that again broke forth. But it was evident from Jenkins's gestures, as he turned and addressed Cowen, that he was severely rebuking that gentleman for his interference. Once more the performance continued, Jenkins showing signs of speaking and the roar of

two hundred voices drowning his voice. Again Biggar came to the rescue, and complained that a member opposite was making a noise.

"I beg just to name him—the hon. bar'net the Member for Scarborough!"

"All interruptions are out of order," said the Speaker, thus called upon, "not excepting those of the hon. member for Cavan."

Loud laughter and prolonged cheering followed this rebuke, which had the effect of reducing Biggar to silence during the remainder of the scene. Relieved by the rest afforded by these brief interludes, Jenkins started off again, and for still a quarter of an hour the scene lasted without any variation, except that of two further interruptions on points of order, one from Mure, and the second from Beresford Hope.

At twenty minutes to six Jenkins resumed his seat, having been in conflict with the House for forty minutes. Then from the other side Sir Robert Peel rose and supported the motion for the adjournment, on the ground that the answers received from the Ministry were "very unsatisfactory." Sir Robert, lapsing into a discussion of the policy which led to the war in Zululand, was called to order by the Speaker, and resumed his seat. Chaplin briefly but sharply lectured the right hon. baronet for perilling his Parliamentary reputation by appearing under the leadership of Jenkins. After a few words from Mure, the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressed his deep regret at what had taken place, and his opinion that it was neither for the dignity of the House nor the convenience of public business that matters such as these should be brought forward irregularly. There was no desire on the part of the Government to evade any portion of their responsibility, and they were quite prepared when the proper time came to discuss the whole affair.

Hartington agreed in the opinion that the scene just witnessed was to be regretted, though he doubted whether the House had consulted its dignity in the course of the interruption pursued. If members were to exercise the right of control over individual members, they ought to be impartial, and Hartington could not help noticing that when Peel had followed up Jenkins, he was permitted to speak almost without interruption. But the noble lord could not offer any defence of Jenkins's procedure. He

had never made any attempt to get a hearing, but came down and without notice attacked Lord Chelmsford, and attempted to drag the House into a serious debate, for which it was not prepared.

When Hartington sat down Jenkins withdrew his motion for the adjournment, and the scene terminated, after occupying an hour and a quarter.

Mar. 25.—A vote
of censure in
the Lords.

Not since the winter session, when the last war but one was discussed, has the House of Lords been so crowded. In anticipation of a division, the Conservative peers had mustered in strong force, and left scarcely a bench unoccupied. On the benches behind that on which Earl Granville sat, with a carriage rug wrapped about his legs, there were many blank spaces, forecasting the result of a division in an assembly where the Conservative element is numerically overpowering. Noble lords who desired to be near the orator for the better convenience of hearing sat in clusters on the bench at the table. On the cross benches were the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Duke of Connaught, the Duke of Cambridge, and the Earl of Derby. The side galleries were thronged by ladies; but owing to the prevalence of Court mourning the chamber lacked the wealth of colour with which it is usually endowed on similar occasions. With one remarkable exception—a lady clad from bonnet to shoes in brilliant scarlet—all the ladies were in mourning of more or less completeness. The Duchess of Teck was in deepest black. The Duchess of Connaught had conceded something to her bridal estate, and was not wholly funereal in her dress. Nor was the Duchess of Edinburgh, who sat at her side, in unmitigated mourning. But the prevailing colour was black, both on the floor of the House and in the galleries that surrounded it. The crown of a black bonnet was visible through the turrets of the canopy over the throne, the wearer herself being hidden from view.

The railed-off space before the throne was crowded with Privy Councillors. The King of the Belgians was an early arrival, and due honour had been paid to him by placing a chair for him in the centre of the space at the foot of the throne. The Privy Councillors were inclined, however, to stand on their privileges, and, thronging in front of the Monarch, made it

necessary, if he would see as well as hear, that he should stand up. Accordingly he remained standing during the earlier period of the debate, and for some time had on his right hand Cross, and on his left "Sir Peel."

At a quarter past five the Marquis of Lansdowne rose, amid cheers from the Opposition benches, to move a resolution declaring "That the House, while willing to support her Majesty's Government in all necessary measures for defending the possessions of her Majesty in South Africa, regrets that an ultimatum calculated to produce immediate war should have been presented to the Zulu King without authority from the responsible advisers of the Crown, and that an offensive war should have been commenced without imperative and pressing necessity or adequate preparation; and the House further regrets that after the censure passed upon the High Commissioner by her Majesty's Government, in a despatch of the 19th March, the conduct of affairs in South Africa should be retained in his hands."

Lansdowne, in a speech of moderate duration—he had concluded by six o'clock—succeeded in making a very telling case in support of his resolution. Discussing the portion of the published correspondence in which Chelmsford, with the approval of Bartle Frere, asks for reinforcements, and is answered with hesitation, he observed that reinforcements were not sent because the Government were afraid of the purpose to which Bartle Frere would put them. The High Commissioner had a policy, her Majesty's Government had none; and, pending the evolution of one, they were not inclined to put a knife into Bartle Frere's hands, lest he should cut his fingers. In demanding the recall of Bartle Frere, he observed that if such conduct as his were to be overlooked, if Parliament showed any indifference to it, the whole system of colonial government must undergo a change. It had been said that the British flag waved over an empire on which the sun never set; but if such a policy as that which had resulted in the Zulu war was to be tolerated, the time would come when it would be said that the sun never ceased to shine on the strife and suffering occasioned by the spread of that empire.

Cranbrook was equally brief, if scarcely so pointed. In a single sentence he indicated the line of defence which the Government had taken up.

"It is not," he said, "upon the character of Sir Bartle Frere that we have passed censure, nor upon his intelligence, nor his faithfulness to the Government. It is because he was too presumptuous; that he took responsibilities upon himself which it was not necessary for him to take at the period; and that after he had received such distinct impressions from the Government of their desire to avoid war, however great the pressure, it was his duty, or, at all events, it would have been far better, if he had consulted the Government before embarking on war."

Up to this point the brilliant audience had kept well together, and there was evidently a disposition to hear Blachford, who next rose. But it soon became evident that his lordship was not able to make himself heard, and after a patient attempt at overcoming the difficulty, the audience began to disperse, and in the space of half an hour the House presented much of its ordinary appearance. Carnarvon followed Blachford, and undertook the defence of Bartle Frere, calling to witness "a long unblemished career of public trust and public service," in proof that the High Commissioner had not acted lightly or recklessly, but after the fullest consideration of circumstances of which Carnarvon claimed he was an exceptionally capable judge.

The debate was continued through the prolonged dinner hour by Stanley of Alderley (who, like Blachford, was almost inaudible), Cadogan, and Kimberley. After a brief speech from Salisbury, to which Somerset replied, the Premier rose, and was welcomed by a subdued cheer from the Conservative side. It was eleven o'clock, and the House had filled up again by the returning tide of members and spectators. Many of the ladies were now in evening dress, and added by so much to the variety of the scene. The space before the throne was again crowded, and Beaconsfield had among his audience many of his colleagues from the other House, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary, the Postmaster-General, and her Majesty's Judge-Advocate-General.

Following the example of all the other principal speakers, the Premier did not speak at great length. He was careful to affirm, and even to attempt to demonstrate, that nothing was further from the views and intentions of the Ministry than a policy of annexation. But his principal object was to insist

that the issue upon which their lordships were about to divide had no relation to the policy pursued in South Africa. That he was ready to discuss when properly challenged. The question now raised was whether the Government were justified in retaining Bartle Frere in office. The Premier urged not only that the Government were right in the course they had adopted, but he took credit for it. If Bartle Frere had been recalled in deference to the thoughtless panic of the hour, no doubt a certain degree of odium would have been averted from the Government, and the world would have been delighted, as it always is, to find a victim. That, however, was a course which Beaconsfield was certain gentlemen sitting on his side of the House would not have approved. He even went so far as to doubt whether gentlemen opposite were capable of approving it. The Government had retained Bartle Frere in office, not only because he was qualified to fulfil its duties, but because his suitability was superior to that of any other possible personage. They had taken that course in the belief that it was best calculated to secure the public welfare, and he confidently appealed to the House of Lords to approve it.

The Premier spoke with great animation, and displayed a physical vigour by comparison with which Granville's measured address seemed tame. The Leader of the Opposition, disregarding the injunction of the Premier, ventured on a wider field than that bounded by the question of Bartle Frere's continuance in office. When England had been at peace with the Zulus for a space of forty years, and when that peace was suddenly broken by English policy, it behoved the nation of superior intelligence to justify the course it had taken. This, Granville submitted, had not yet been done. Just on the stroke of midnight, the House divided, and the resolution was negatived by 156 votes against 61.

Mar. 31. — Mr. Lowe's breakdown. In the Commons a vote of censure similar in terms to that moved by Lord Lansdowne was brought forward by Sir Charles Dilke in a conspicuously able speech. The debate lasted three days, and concluded to-night with a division in which censure was rejected by a significantly reduced majority. On the second night Lowe interposed with a speech evidently carefully prepared.

For twenty minutes he spoke with his usual felicity and command over the House. It now became necessary, for the purpose of his argument, that he should cite extracts from the Blue Books. Taking up a bundle of notes he had placed on the table, he began searching for a particular memorandum. Failing to find it he attempted to quote its substance. A few minutes later reference to the notes again became necessary. He nervously searched among the hopeless conglomeration of memoranda, but without success, and after a painful pause abruptly abandoned the task and resumed his seat, apparently only on the threshold of his speech.

The House generously cheered him on to further attempts, and Gladstone appeared to make a personal attempt in that direction. But Lowe evidently felt the impossibility of successfully proceeding, and Peel seized the opportunity to make his speech.

Apr. 25.—Sir William Harcourt
'fustigates'
Mr. Dodson.

To-night Cross moved a resolution embodying the report of the Select Committee on the Clare County writ, which declared that Sir Bryan O'Loughlen, who had accepted office as Attorney-General for the Colony of Victoria, a place of profit under the Crown within the meaning of the statute, had thereby vacated his seat for County Clare. The discussion was necessarily of a dry and not generally interesting character, a charge from which it was temporarily relieved by a passage of arms between Harcourt and Dodson. Dodson, who supported the resolution, made some remarks upon the irregular attendance of members of the Committee, and pointedly alluded to Harcourt (who, it appears, had not attended any of the meetings), suggesting that he would nevertheless presently rise up "and with portentous manner" deliver his judgment on evidence he had not heard.

Harcourt, with quite unusual warmth, resented this remark. He felt bound, he said, to defend the Committee against this extremely violent, uncalled-for, and unprecedented attack. Returning a little later to the theme, he protested against the "right of an ex-chairman of Committees to fustigate a Committee of the House of Commons in this violent, uncalled-for, and, he was going to say, offensive manner." If such practices

were to continue, it would become increasingly difficult to induce members to sit on Committees.

"No, thank you," they would say when invited to sit, "there is the right hon. gentleman the member for the city of Chester, who, after we have done our best, will hold us up to contempt and scorn."

Apr. 28. — Mr. Gladstone indicates the financial policy of the Government. Amid prolonged cheering Gladstone rose to continue the debate on the Budget. He commenced with the remark that he had not for many years troubled the House at any length with criticisms on financial policy, but a period had now been reached at which it was of vital importance that the financial policy of the Government should be brought under close review. Alluding to a remark made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer at Hogg's dinner on Saturday, he denied that the charge under which the Government rested was one of not imposing taxes. The charge was written in the resolution before the House, and was that the Ministry had indulged in excessive expenditure. What proportion that expenditure assumed he indicated in a couple of sentences. When the Liberal Government came into office at the end of 1868 they received from their predecessors the beneficent bequest of a debt of £14,300,000. The heritage into which the Conservatives entered when they took office in 1874 was an unencumbered legacy of £6,000,000 sterling.

Gladstone proposed to divide his discourse into three heads, first considering the expenditure, its quantity and quality; then the fallacious mode adopted of striking the balances; and, lastly, the doctrine upon which these practices are supported, and which, to his mind, was even more objectionable than the practices themselves. He took, for the purpose of illustration, the expenditure on the Forces, and showed that whilst the average expenditure under this head during the five years of the Liberal Administration had been £25,299,000, it had been augmented, in the year ending 1878-9, by £6,000,000, an augmentation due to the free action of the present Government, and especially to the policy they had thought fit deliberately to adopt with respect to foreign affairs. He showed how this expenditure had increased from year to year up to

the current year, when a sudden reduction was established, and the estimates appeared at the modest, unassuming—nay, bewitching—figures of £27,332,000.

"We have had a reduction in the Estimates this year," he said. "But, sir, a reduction of the Estimates in the sixth year of Parliament bears an unwholesome resemblance to what is known as a death-bed repentance."

Passing in rapid review the growth of the spirited foreign policy beginning with "the silly business of the purchase of the Suez Canal," he in slow and solemn voice counted up the gains.

"You have," he said, addressing the Ministers, who sat silent, "you have increased the territory of the country, it is true. We own the Fiji Islands, which were not ours previous to 1874; you have got what you call an occupation of Cyprus; you have completed some annexations in Afghanistan; you have made a disastrous accession of territory in South Africa. You have truly enlarged the empire; but it may be said, in the simple words of Scripture, 'You have multiplied the nation, but not increased its joy.'"

W. H. Smith had claimed that the result of the increased expenditure is bearing fruit, inasmuch as the policy of the Government has made our relations with foreign powers more satisfactory.

"What," cried Gladstone, amid loud cheers, "is the nation or the race on earth with which you have improved your relations? Is it with the natives of South Africa? or with the hill tribes of Afghanistan? or with the oppressed races of the Turkish Empire? or with the eighty million who people Russia?"

Proposing to quote an extract from a speech delivered by Derby on the 19th March, 1874, the mention of the ex-Foreign Secretary's name was received with a contemptuous cry from below the gangway on the Ministerial side.

"The present Lord Derby," Gladstone repeated, "was a man who, when he was your Foreign Secretary, it was your daily custom to extol."

What Lord Derby said on this occasion was: "At the present moment the position of the country with regard to our foreign relations is most satisfactory. There is no State whatever with which our relations are not most cordial."

Turning next to the question of accounts, Gladstone took up the figures in the last Budget and read out the allegation as to the surplus of £1,904,000. "In the first place," he said, "there is no surplus at all. There is a debt." Going on to show that the provisions for the war in Zululand had not been met, he was interrupted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who wished to recall to his attention that he had explained further on that this surplus might be absorbed by the charges of the Zulu war.

"Yes," Gladstone retorted, "but of the excellent speeches we all make in this House, and which go forth to the public, there is not one in a thousand of the readers who reads all the speech or who goes beyond the half-dozen lines of summary."

He denounced in trenchant sentences the departure from all precedent in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's method of dealing with the Zulu war. The Chancellor had come down to the House, and said that after consultation with the Secretary for War or the First Lord of the Admiralty he was not able to make a definite and particular estimate, and that therefore the charges would be postponed. He quoted the precedents of the Crimean War and of the Chinese War to show how different had been the practice of former Chancellors of the Exchequer. Beyond these particular laches there was the regular practice of the Government of exceeding in their final appropriation the estimates of the April Budget. In 1874 the excess of the final appropriation over the Budget was £1,016,000; in 1875 it had been £1,209,000; in 1876, £1,127,000; in 1877, £6,875,000; and last year, £3,622,000. The effect of all this was that the House lost its control, the Government lost its responsibility, and the fundamental principle of keeping the income up to the amount of the expenditure was lost sight of.

Whilst professing the warmest personal regard for Stafford Northcote, Gladstone declared that he had reversed all the precepts of Sir Robert Peel, and had turned upside down all the principles which had guided English Chancellors of the Exchequer during the last half century. With animated gestures and in impassioned voice he declaimed his peroration:—

"If the country approves this financial revolution that,

as I have shown you by hard facts and figures, is in progress, the country is its own master to return again a Parliament like-minded with the present, and to perpetuate the Administration under which we enjoy such a bounteous supply of financial as well as other blessings. From my point of view matters seem very different. I do not undertake to predict either what this Parliament will do, or what the nation will do in considering its own interests and in making provision for its own fortunes; but, unless I am mistaken, the doctrines that are now promulgated on the part of the Government are financial delusions, and, if they be so, I can only say I am convinced of this—that the longer they last, the more complete sway they obtain for a time under the administration and the influence of the party opposite, the sharper will be the reaction when it comes, the more complete the reversal of your momentary triumph, and the more severe the retribution politically inflicted upon the party that has invented these erroneous doctrines, and that has too fatally carried them out.”

Gladstone concluded at a quarter-past eight, and had thus spoken well into the dangerous limits of the dinner-hour. But the crowded House which had awaited his uprising remained to the end, and loud and repeated cheering broke from the Opposition benches as he resumed his seat. While he spoke, every seat on the floor of the House had been occupied, and a double row of members filled the gallery opposite the orator. The Strangers' Gallery was packed to its utmost limits, and among other Peers in the portion of the gallery allotted to their convenience were Carlingford, Rosebery, O'Hagan, Airlie, Dudley, and Ravensworth. Dudley, coming down from the gallery, waited at the entrance to the House till Gladstone passed out, to offer his warm congratulations on his speech—a magnificent oration, which, however, did not prevent the resolution upon which it was founded being defeated by 303 votes against 230.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE SPEAKER ARRAIGNED.

Lord John Manners—Mr. Justin McCarthy's maiden Speech—Father and Son
—The Speaker arraigned—The Speaker acquitted—A Prisoner at the Bar.

May 1. — Lord John Manners. Poor John Manners! What a gay and gallant spirit dwells in that spare, gaunt frame, which, as it is swayed to and fro with gusts of eloquence, suggests a fir-tree the winter has stripped of foliage, and for a crown of green leaves has given a coronet of snow. Lord John is now thumping the desk with juvenile energy, and wagging his ancient pow with an emphasis that ought to have considerable effect. Ever so many years ago, when his poetic soul consented to be bound by the chains of verse, he wrote a poem, of which he still affectionately preserves the title in those brief biographical memoirs which he authorises in "Dod" and similar compilations. "England's Trust, and other Poems," is the name of the little work, modestly, yet hopefully, put forth at a time when a *Quarterly Review* bore testimony to the facts that "Lord John Manners is a young nobleman, aged 27, hopeful, generous, benevolent, and well-disposed."

In those days Lord John's chivalry went forth to pay allegiance to the great, but misunderstood and finally decapitated, monarch, Charles I. Kneeling beside the tomb of "the Monarch Martyr," his emotion occasionally getting the better of his syntax, Lord John sings:—

"Fain would I
In meet expression own
Thy boundless sovereignty,
Thou captive on a throne,
O'er my soul's pulses; but in vain
The attempt, too grand, I make:
My feeble-hearted strain
Trembles to undertake
A theme so sacred."

His "strain" to-day still suggests feebleness. But there is no trembling about the grand old gentleman. He is, in fact, as

bellicose as Bombastes Furioso or Lord Cranbrook. He lashes the Opposition in easy satire, delivered in a mellifluous tone. He has a tear for those who love him and a smile for those who hate. Sometimes he points a long lean arm at Gladstone, a personage who is, perhaps, the incarnation of all principles that are to him distasteful—a man who, he does not doubt, would even let our old nobility die, if the sacrifice should preserve to us Commerce, Laws, and Learning. George Balfour, tempted into interpolating a remark, is rolled over in the dust with a light, graceful, but muscular movement. Withal, Lord John preserves a grace and ease of manner that sometimes succeed in absolutely masking his strength. He literally ambles round his arguments, and addresses guilty gentlemen opposite with graceful curvatures of the body that would have excited the enthusiasm of Mr. Turveydrop. He looks as if he were about to give the Opposition a dancing-lesson, and nobody would be surprised if presently Harcourt were to offer his arm to Gladstone, and the two were to step it down the floor of the House, while Lord John critically surveyed them through his rakish eye-glass.

Lord John is really making a good debating speech. When it comes to be printed, if it ever be printed, it will doubtless appear that there is not much in it. But in the give-and-take of Parliamentary debate manner counts for much. A lame jest, which, seen in print, would not raise the ghost of a smile, will, aptly spoken, send a crowded House into convulsions of laughter. Lord John *looks* as if he were saying something good, and evidently enjoys it himself. Moreover, he, the son of a duke, is Postmaster-General, and has been a familiar figure in Parliamentary life within the memory of most men who sit and hear him. These various reasons combine to make a little wit go a long way; and so, whilst he dances, his friends behind pipe to him the inspiring music of laughter and cheers.

Yet it must be confessed that his influence upon debate is absolutely nothing. With an interval of three sessions, he has sat in Parliament for thirty-seven years, and it is not too much to say that if, during that period, Newark, Colchester, and North Leicestershire had successively returned a Maypole as their representative, political life and political thought would not have varied in the slightest degree. Lord John has always looked tall and graceful, and even picturesque. But so would a Maypole.

May 2.—Mr. Justin McCarthy's maiden speech.

In debate to-day, on the Purchase Clauses of the Irish Land Act, Justin McCarthy rose and made a singularly successful maiden speech. He found something ominous in the unanimity of opinion as to the desirability of accepting the resolution. It had been too sudden, and was a condition of affairs arrived at after the resolution had been too brief a time under discussion. Going directly to the heart of the question, McCarthy said it was evident the Government were about to accept the resolution. But there were two ways in which that might be done. They might accept it with the intent to deal with it in an honest spirit; or they might permit it to pass with the object of shelving the question. He was afraid there was some reason to anticipate the worse conclusion. He did not like to suggest any unpleasant similitude for hon. and right hon. gentlemen on the Treasury bench. But he was reminded that there was in classical history a person named Phorcys, whose daughters had amongst them only one eye, and this they used in turn. Her Majesty's Ministers were something in this position. They saw only with the eyes of Lord Beaconsfield, and the Prime Minister had never shown himself disposed to extend any large measure of land reform to Ireland. Still, he hoped that better counsels would prevail, and as the latest messenger to that House from the Irish people, he ventured to urge upon the Government that they should be prompt and resolute in settling this question.

Speaking an hour later, Bright observed that he "welcomed to the House with sincere pleasure the hon. member for Longford." This marked compliment to a new member was well deserved by a speech which displayed a thorough grasp of the question, was marked by great felicity of style, and was delivered with an easy grace that hit the medium (rare under the peculiar circumstances of a maiden speech) between deference to his audience and confidence in himself.

June 12.—Father and son.

The Gathorne Hardys pass and resemble each other. The session which saw the father removed to another place beheld the son enter, and thus, by an especial manifestation of Providence, the House of Commons still has its Gathorne Hardy. The resemblance between father and son is really marvellous. If one were to have sat with

closed eyes just now, he might have thought that the translation of the late Minister for War to the House of Lords was a dream, and that he was still among us, ready to go on the rampage on the slightest provocation. The same voice, with the same measure of huskiness; the same breathless speech; the same lines of thought; and the same style of expression in father and son. This youth, with the nervous body and flushed face, with chin aggressively thrust forward towards the enemy, might well be the young member who sat for Leominster twenty-two years ago. We catch his words and sentences in the debate, and perceive that the subject under discussion is India. It must, then, be the Indian Mutiny that is before the House, and the gentleman with the grey beard and spectacles, who sits in the place of the Leader, must be Lord Palmerston—though I do not remember seeing Lord Palmerston with spectacles, and he certainly had not a long grey beard. Then the Chancellor of the Exchequer must be Sir George Cornwall Lewis, and the Home Secretary is Sir George Grey. Mr. Cardwell answers for India; Mr. Horsman has not yet discovered that the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland does not give a man enough to do; whilst Mr. Disraeli sits on the opposite benches, patriotically preparing amendments for the hampering of Ministers.

Roebuck, sitting to-night on the front bench below the gangway, though as far as possible parted from the terrible Dillwyn, dreams of this with half-closed eyes. Looking up, he perceives that the speaker is much younger than was the Gathorne Hardy who represented Leominster at the time of the Indian Mutiny, and upon closer attention discovers that he is talking about India under very different circumstances. A great deal has happened since then; among other things, the advancement of Mr. Disraeli to the dignity of Lord Beaconsfield, and Mr. Roebuck's acceptance at his hands of the title of Right Honourable.

July 10. — The
Speaker ar-
raigned.

To-day's proceedings in the House of Commons were varied by a scene which, amid a somewhat continuous series of outbursts, presents a distinctive feature, inasmuch as the authority of the Speaker was directly impugned. The House resumed Committee on the

Army Bill at an early hour and under promising circumstances. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in conversation on the course of business, took an opportunity of expressing the hope that fair progress might be made, and at the same time disclaimed cognisance of the reported existence of arrangements whereby, if necessary, the House might be kept sitting continuously.

For something over an hour nothing had happened to disturb the fruition of the Chancellor's hopes. It is true that within the first hour Parnell, displeased at the absence of the Colonial Secretary and the Home Secretary (who, having nothing to do with the Bill, had taken the liberty of temporarily leaving the House), moved to report progress. But he did not persist in this playful threat, and the consideration of the clause proceeded. Just before seven o'clock, whilst an amendment of Chamberlain's to clause 166 was under discussion, A. M. Sullivan suddenly rose and moved to report progress, on the ground that there was in a side gallery a gentleman, not a member of the House, engaged in taking notes. This, pending explanation, Sullivan held to be a breach of privilege, and he claimed that the question might be considered with the Speaker in the chair. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the understanding that business would forthwith be resumed after the attention of the Speaker had been called to the matter, consented to progress being reported. This was done, and the Speaker sent for.

When he took his seat, Sullivan called his attention to the presence of the stranger in a portion of the House reserved for the use of members, and asked by whose authority he was there; and if by authority, with what intention such a report was taken. Callan, who claimed the subject as one he had intended to deal with, said that officials of the House had been instructed to spy upon the acts of members. Two Committee clerks, whose names he gave, had been told off to take notes of the number of times Irish members spoke during the progress of the Army Bill. This Callan characterised as "a dishonourable act," a remark which brought Dodson up on a point of order. Callan explained that he had not the slightest intention of imputing dishonourable actions to officials of the House, but in his opinion the action itself was dishonourable.

The Speaker said, amid loud cheers, that as the act was done by his authority, it was time he interposed. He proceeded to

explain that, desiring that minutes of the proceedings should be taken in a more detailed manner than they were supplied in the papers delivered to members, he had instructed the clerks to take an extended report. This had nothing to do with individual members of the House, and was a perfectly fair and impartial report of the proceedings.

The right hon. gentleman was then subjected to a somewhat sharp cross-examination by Parnell. Were the reports verbatim? and if not, of what description were they? The Speaker said the reports were not verbatim, and he could only describe them as minutes more enlarged than those supplied to members, and containing an account of all the speeches.

"All?" said Parnell, still doubtful.

"All," answered the Speaker, emphatically; and here the episode seemed to end.

But it was only to break out in an increasingly violent manner. O'Connor Power, addressing the Speaker, observed that the proceedings he had been pleased to order were unprecedented in the history of the House of Commons. He was continuing in the same strain, when the Speaker pointed out that the question which had arisen in Committee had been answered. If O'Connor Power desired to raise the question in a more detailed form, it was open for him to do so. The Speaker slowly making preparations to leave the chair, O'Connor Power hastily rose, and was greeted with shouts of "Order!" from the opposite benches. Remaining on his feet, and leaning excitedly across in the direction of the chair, holding out his hands as if to clutch the departing Speaker, he shouted—

"I protest——"

His protest, whatever it might have been, was lost amid a roar of contumely from the Ministerialists, during which the Speaker, gathering his robes about him, turned and left the chair, O'Connor Power, with passionate gesticulations, protesting in dumb show. It seemed that if he had been able to reach the chair there would have been a repetition of an historical scene, and Speaker Brand, like Speaker Lenthall, would have been forcibly kept down in his seat. As it was, the length of the table and the space of half the floor intervening, the Speaker escaped, and disappeared from the scene.

Raikes, quickly resuming his place at the table, began with

adroit promptitude to take up business where it had been interrupted :—

“ Clause 166, page 92, leave out all words after——”

But before he could get any further, O'Connor Power was again on his feet, and, speaking now in a slower and more deliberate manner, he moved to report progress, on the ground that he was “ still dissatisfied ” with the explanation of the Speaker, and that by the Speaker's too quickly leaving the chair the House had been deprived of its jurisdiction. The Chancellor of the Exchequer attempted to bring matters back to conventional grooves by observing that he “ presumed we were not thinking of disputing the ruling of the Speaker,” a surmise which Parnell answered by loudly crying “ Yes, yes.” Since this was the case, the Chancellor trusted the question would be taken in its proper place and time, in which hope he was supported by Hartington.

This concurrence of authority from the two front benches suggested to Parnell the certainty that the advice so tendered must be wrong. The question, he said, was “ one of breach of privilege by the Speaker of this House.” The Chancellor of the Exchequer asked whether these words were in order. Raikes, while pointing out the extreme undesirability of pursuing this sort of discussion, ruled that the remark was not absolutely out of order. Parnell, continuing, repeated that he impugned the conduct of the Speaker, whereupon Dodson, rising to a point of order, asked whether it was competent to consider the conduct of the Speaker, except in a fully-constituted House?

Parnell had resumed his seat when Dodson rose, but rising just as that gentleman sat down, he was confronted by the Chairman, who had risen to answer the question put to him on a point of order. As Parnell showed no indication of an intention to yield to the authority of the Chairman, a deafening cry of “ Order ! ” arose from the Ministerial benches. Parnell, momentarily yielding to the storm, resumed his seat, but was up again in an instant, shouting at the top of his voice, whilst members on the crowded benches opposite raised a cry, the like of which is not often heard in the House of Commons. In a condition of the intensest excitement, Parnell continued rising and sitting down, the Chairman all the while standing waiting for an opportunity to give his judgment on the point of order

raised. At length it occurred to Parnell that he would gain some advantage if he resumed his seat, and continued his remarks from that position. So seated, and with his hat on, he maintained his rivalry with the two hundred angry gentlemen opposite.

"We wish——" he cried, and then came the angry, almost savage, roar.

When it ceased, Parnell commenced again. "We wish——"

This was followed by the roar, sharp, short, and in perfect unison. Thrice Parnell tried, but got no further than the indefinite expression of desire. Eventually Raikes succeeded in making his voice heard, and gave his judgment on the point of order submitted to him. When he had finished Parnell concluded the sentence he had ineffectually tried to speak.

"We wish," he said, "to impugn the conduct of the Speaker of this House, before the House, with the Speaker in the chair."

He went on to say that he wished the Committee to report on the one-sided report prepared by direction of the Speaker. John Manners now rose and submitted whether it was not out of order to characterise the report as one-sided, when the Speaker had declared it was a full and impartial report. The Chairman could not say that it was out of order, being the expression of Parnell's individual opinion. Parnell, continuing, took a fresh turn by demanding that the official taking notes—"this unprecedented reporter in the side gallery," as O'Donnell subsequently called him—should withdraw. As a matter of fact, this had already for some time been accomplished, which presently coming to the knowledge of O'Connor Power, he withdrew his motion; not, as he was careful to put it, on the point of order, but for the convenience of the Committee, and because the official had withdrawn.

The Committee at once resumed business, but it had not proceeded many minutes when Gray moved to report progress, on the ground that the official had returned. This appeared to be the case, and for some time total collapse of the business of the evening was threatened. A. M. Sullivan threatened to settle the matter by spying strangers, "and continuing to spy them" as long as the official remained. After some further heated talk, it was decided, with the concurrence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the matter should be formally brought up as a

question of privilege. Then at nine o'clock, the scene having lasted without interruption for over two hours, the Committee once more resumed, and took up the Army Bill on the proposition, put with unchanged intonation by Raikes, that on "Clause 166, page 92, leave out all words after——"

July 11. — The Speaker acquitted. To-day the House of Commons was crowded to a degree not often witnessed at the first hour of a morning sitting. The Treasury bench was so thronged that the Judge Advocate General (Cavendish Bentinck), a statesman to whom many references have been made in the course of the debate which culminated in the proceedings of yesterday, was obliged to find a seat on a back bench. The front Opposition bench was scarcely less crowded. The Strangers' gallery was of course full, and a number of peers early occupied the seats allotted to their convenience. Prince Christian, not a frequent visitor to the House of late, sat over the clock. Later in the afternoon, the seat to his right was occupied by the Marquis Tsêng, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Emperor of China, whose dress, a glory of golden silk, stood out in charming relief from the monotony of the black coats of Western civilisation. Another distinguished stranger, who modestly occupied a seat under the gallery, was Mr. Thomas Collins, a gentleman whose connection with the particular Parliamentary proceedings of late elaborated by Parnell is historical.

The preliminary proceedings occupied half an hour, and at half-past two the Speaker and Parnell rose together. The latter giving way, the Speaker observed that a great deal of misapprehension appeared to exist with respect to the nature of the reports he had authorised to be made, and he would only say that, if any member pleased to move for them, it would be an unopposed return. Parnell, without taking any note of this remark, proceeded to observe, "in reference to a matter that occurred yesterday," that the duty devolved upon him to submit to the House a statement of the circumstances, and to ask it to agree to a declaration, that the conduct of the Speaker had been a breach of privilege. Parnell proposed to prove two statements—first, that the Speaker has no original jurisdiction; and, second, that the House has always disapproved

of the making of any minutes except those taken by the clerk at the table, or the assistant clerk. This position he fortified by extracts from "Mr. Hatsell's Precedents." Some of these appeared to the House to have a bearing on the case not contemplated by Parnell, and he was interrupted by loud cheers when he read out how Mr. Hatsell had laid down the regulation that "when Mr. Speaker desired to speak, he should be heard without interruption," and that "Mr. Speaker should on all occasions be treated with the greatest respect."

Having argued that the Speaker had exceeded his duty, and acted contrary to rules in the course he had taken, Parnell concluded by reading a resolution in the following terms:—"Resolved: that any report or record of the proceedings of this House, or a Committee of the whole House, made, taken, or kept by officials of this House as an official act or otherwise, without the previous order or sanction or knowledge of the House, and for purposes not previously revealed to the House, other than the notes or minutes of the Orders and Proceedings of the House, or of a Committee of the whole House, taken at the table by the clerk or the assistant-clerk, is without precedent in the customs and usages of Parliament."

The Speaker pointed out that the written resolution previously placed in his hands by Parnell had contained, in addition to the above, the words "is a breach of the privilege of Parliament, and is a danger to the liberty and independence of debate." He asked whether Parnell desired to drop those words, to which Parnell assented by nodding his head. O'Connor Power seconded the motion in a speech which, like that of Parnell, was exceedingly moderate in tone, though after the manner of the member for Mayo, it was a little warm in language.

These two speeches were commendably brief, and at ten minutes past three the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose. He commenced by paying a tribute to the impartiality, dignity, and courtesy of the Speaker, a tribute approved by cheers from all parts of the House. The Speaker had never failed in the fulfilment of his duty to the House, and it was not too much to hope that the House would fulfil its duty towards the Speaker, alike as a matter of fairness to him and for the maintenance of the position of the House itself. The first duty owed to the Speaker was respect, and the Chancellor added,

amid loud cheers, that the respect must not be of the lips only. As to the resolution submitted by Parnell, it was impossible to consider it disconnected from surrounding circumstances. He submitted that, bearing this in mind, the Speaker had been fully justified in taking the course he had adopted. He produced a book dating back to 1850, and showing that since that time it had been the regular custom of the Speaker and his predecessors to enter the name of each member who spoke in debate, and the hour at which he commenced and finished. He concluded by moving an amendment in the following terms:—"That notice having been taken while the House was in Committee of the presence in one of the side galleries of a gentleman engaged in taking notes of the proceedings of the Committee, and Mr. Speaker having informed the House that the official in question was so employed under his direction, and that the notes taken were for the confidential information of the Speaker, this House is of opinion that Mr. Speaker was justified in the directions given by him, and is entitled to the support and confidence of this House."

Hartington, who was received with loud and general cheering, seconded the amendment, and joined in the tribute which had been paid to the conduct of the Speaker. Alluding to the tactics which had prevailed, to the delaying of business, he observed that it was a state of things that the House, patient though it was, would not permanently endure. The Speaker had been at the trouble to obtain data on which he might form an opinion as to the question of the delay, and it was not the censure but the thanks of the House that were due to him.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke for a quarter of an hour. Hartington was still more brief, and when at half-past three he resumed his seat, a strong disposition was shown on the part of the House forthwith to take the division. Julian Goldsmid, rising to continue the debate, was met with many evidences of disinclination to hear him. A storm of cries for the division stopped him at the outset, and for some minutes his sentences progressed laboriously through a chorus of "Divide!" When at length he sat down, Gladstone rose, with an apology for continuing a debate which the House evidently wished closed. He spoke briefly but strongly in favour of the amendment.

When he sat down there vanished all hope of closing the debate at the morning sitting, if indeed any had existed. Courtney came next, and whilst expressing the view that the unusual circumstances of obstruction should be met by unusual action on the part of the House, he declared that such action should be taken openly. The House, having now given up the attempt to close the discussion, began to empty, and before a comparatively scanty audience the discussion was continued. At twenty-five minutes to seven Callan rose, protesting that he had no desire to avoid the division. Accidentally or otherwise, his remarks were so timed that he resumed his seat at fourteen minutes to seven, just leaving time for the division to be taken on Parnell's resolution. But there was no time to put the amendment, the sitting of necessity being suspended, it being ten minutes past seven when the division was announced. Parnell's resolution was rejected by 421 votes against 29, one of the largest majorities entered on the records of the House. The announcement of the figures was received with loud cheers. The minority was almost entirely made up of Irish members. As far as might be observed, the only English members who voted for the resolution were Wilfrid Lawson, Jacob Bright, Courtney, Hopwood, MacDonald, and Kenealy.

On the House resuming at nine, Gray moved an amendment to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's amendment (now the substantive motion), embodying, as he said, some of Mr. Hatsell's Precedents, to the effect that the clerk at the table should take no notes except by the order of the House. The attempt to renew the debate proved utterly futile, though speeches were made which prolonged the proceedings by an additional couple of hours. One of those speeches, contributed by Bowyer, nearly brought about an unexpected crisis. The hon. baronet inadvertently took notice of the presence of strangers. The Speaker was, however, judiciously deaf to this slip, and the speechmaking went on amid constant interruption from a House weary of much talking and anxious only for the division. The House dividing on Gray's amendment, it was rejected by 292 votes against 24. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's resolution was then put, and agreed to without a division—a conclusion of the business hailed with prolonged cheering.

July 23.—A prisoner at the Bar.

A House might have been "made" at twelve o'clock if the Speaker had been pleased to enter promptly at the legal hour. At ten minutes past twelve, when prayers were read, the benches were filled much the same as at the same epoch of an ordinary Government night, and at twenty minutes past, when strangers were admitted, the House presented an appearance unparalleled at the same hour on any Wednesday during the existence of the present Parliament.

This unusual assembly was due to the interest attaching to the proceedings in a matter of breach of privilege. But it was unexpectedly justified by the importance of an announcement the Colonial Secretary was accidentally prepared to make. A presentiment of important news seemed to pervade the House, and, as Hicks-Beach approached the table, the buzz of conversation was stilled by impatient cries of "Order!" The Colonial Secretary, with briefest preface, proceeded to read a telegram from Bartle Frere, which commenced by "congratulating her Majesty's Government" on the decisive victory obtained over the forces of the Zulu King. This courtly narrowing of the limit of interest in the communication was disregarded by the crowded House, which listened with profoundest attention while the Colonial Secretary read the brief but dramatic recital of how Cetewayo, finally brought to bay, had given battle in the open to the British troops; how his forces, estimated at from twelve to twenty thousand men, had been utterly routed with trifling loss to the British; how the victors had advanced and destroyed Ulundi; and how the royal kraal had been burned.

Bartle Frere added that this victory had been obtained under Lord Chelmsford, Wolseley being detained by stress of weather at Durban, and that the news had been brought by Archibald Forbes, the correspondent of the *Daily News*, who had outstripped all couriers by a ride of fifteen hours in the saddle.

When the loud and prolonged cheers with which this news was received had subsided, the Speaker announced that "the clerk would now proceed to read the Orders of the Day." The first on the paper was the question of privilege, in respect of which Mr. Grissell and Mr. Ward had been ordered to appear at the Bar, charged with the offence of offering to parties concerned in a private Bill to "square" the Committee to which it

had been referred. The Speaker inquired whether these persons were in attendance. The Serjeant-at-Arms, leaving his chair, and advancing just within the Bar, answered that Mr. Ward was in attendance, but that Mr. Grissell had not put in an appearance.

"Will you," said the Speaker, remaining seated as he addressed the Serjeant-at-Arms, "state what measures have been taken to secure the attendance of Mr. Grissell?"

The Serjeant-at-Arms explained that on Tuesday a messenger delivered the mandate at his house, and had been informed by Mrs. Grissell that her husband had gone abroad. The Serjeant-at-Arms had received yesterday morning a telegram from Mr. Grissell, dated from Boulogne, stating that he had been sent away by the doctor's orders, and was not well enough to travel on the return journey.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer observed that this telegram did not appear "at all satisfactory." He therefore moved a resolution declaring that Mr. Grissell, having been ordered to attend the House, and having neglected to do so, be taken into the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms, and that Mr. Speaker do issue his warrant to that effect. Forster having seconded the resolution, and Knatchbull-Hugessen having endeavoured to show that if the House had only taken his advice Mr. Grissell would now have been in custody, the question was put and agreed to.

The Speaker, rising again, consulted the pleasure of the House as to Mr. Ward's being called in. A cry of "Aye" responding, the Speaker said—

"Let John Sandilands Ward be called in."

The Serjeant-at-Arms left the House, two of the messengers advanced to the cross benches, and, amid manifest signs of interest, pulled out the Bar. Meanwhile the Serjeant-at-Arms had returned, accompanied by a tall, dark gentleman, who advanced towards the Bar with solemn step, and seized it with both hands as he bowed low to the Speaker. The Speaker, still remaining seated, addressed the prisoner at the Bar, and informed him that his conduct had been the subject of patient inquiry by a Committee of the House, whose conclusions were expressed in the final paragraph of the report which he read for the information of the prisoner, at whose side stood in close attendance the veteran doorkeeper, Mr. Hartley.

Being invited to offer any remarks that occurred to him, the prisoner read with careful elocution a document, the gist of which lay in the last sentence, wherein he submitted himself to the decision of the House, whatever it might be, but impressed with the hope that "this honourable House would give due consideration to the solemn statement which he now made, that he was the victim of a cruelly unfortunate misapprehension."

The prisoner having been ordered to withdraw, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, rising again, pointed out that the statement of the prisoner did not differ from that made by him before the Select Committee, and upon which, after full investigation, they had decided upon his guilt. He would therefore move that John Sandilands Ward, having been a party to an offer to control the decision of a Select Committee of the House, had been guilty of a breach of privilege. Goschen observing that it would be convenient if one of the Committee would state whether there was anything in the prisoner's declaration which differed from the evidence given before the Committee, Walpole stated that the points urged were precisely the same as those upon which the Committee had come to their deliberate decision. This representation was confirmed by Pemberton and Gray, members of the Committee; and Forster having seconded this resolution, it was put from the Chair, and carried without dissent.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said it now became the duty of the House to consider what course they would take. He moved that Mr. Ward be committed to the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms, and that the Speaker do issue his warrant to this effect. This resolution (which it may be mentioned as a matter of detail was not seconded) was put and carried, after some remarks from Denison, and a few observations on Constitutional law from Bowyer, who had made several attempts to rise earlier in the discussion, and whose ultimate triumph was grievously marred by impatient cries of "Agreed! Agreed!" The Serjeant-at-Arms, not waiting for the formal issue of the warrant, left the House in search of his prisoner, and the House proceeded, as if nothing particular had happened, to the next order of the day—the Public Works Loan Bill.

In the meantime Mr. Ward had been standing outside by the doorkeeper's chair, awaiting the issue of the proceedings.

On being informed of the result, he quietly accompanied Captain Gosset to the prison-rooms in the Clock Tower, where he will remain during the pleasure of the House. Two messengers have been detailed to keep watch and ward over him, an outer-guard being furnished by the police. The prison-rooms in the House of Commons adjoin the residence of the Serjeant-at-Arms. They consist of two suites, one on the ground floor and one above, the latter comprising bedrooms for the prisoner and his warder. Regarded as a temporary residence, they are by no means uncomfortable, and the prisoner will be subject to no other discipline than what is necessary for his safe keeping.

SESSION 1880.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DISSOLUTION.

The Queen's last Appearance in Parliament—Dissolution announced— Historical last Words—Dying—dead !

Feb. 15. — The Queen's last appearance in Parliament. The fog which during the past few days has filled the House of Lords, in common with less illustrious chambers in London, had happily cleared off before noon, and the spectacle of the opening of Parliament by the Queen was not dimmed by a too familiar presence. The doors were opened at twelve o'clock, and ladies whose seats were not so secure as those of the peeresses took the earliest opportunity of claiming them. But it was one o'clock before the House began to present anything like an animated appearance. As usual, the peers had chivalrously abandoned the greater number of their seats to ladies, reserving for their own accommodation the front row of the benches, and a few seats placed closely together on the space ordinarily assigned to the occupants of the cross benches. These were not so inviting that their lordships were to be induced to fill them before the appointed time. But many having ladies in charge strolled in and out, giving to a scene rapidly growing in gorgeousness a groundwork of colour of the particular red which from time immemorial has dyed the robes of a peer of Parliament.

At half-past one nearly all who were bidden as spectators were seated, and there remained nothing but to wait and watch. The throne, draped through long successive sessions, was uncovered, save for the ermine cloak which lay upon it with rich white silk lining outwards. In the recess on either side were two chairs. At the steps of the throne was the famous seat known as the woolsack, a bench which does not

differ from those commoner conveniences temporarily impressed for the occasion, and which were ranged together at uncomfortably close quarters before the bar. The woolsack was at the moment tenantless. A few paces before it was another bench of almost precisely similar make, on which sat the Lord Chief Baron, Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, and Mr. Justice Lopes, sole representatives of the judges, who just now chance to be engaged in other than ceremonial business.

When the House of Lords is in session, the bishops are accustomed to sit to the right of the woolsack, removed by the breadth of the gangway from the heated air of politics and partisanship, which in this part of the chamber commences at the front Ministerial bench. But the bishops, like the lay peers, had sacrificed their convenience to hospitality, and, save for the front bench, had given up the whole of their seats to the foreign ambassadors. These, who for the most part had come early, presented a mass of glittering colour, which under gaslight might have been dazzling. As it was, it drew to this part of the House the eyes of all beholders, their excellencies wasting none of the effect because they with one accord elected to stand through the long hour of waiting. The one exception to this rule was the American Chargé d'Affaires, distinguished amid the blaze of diplomatic millinery by the severe simplicity of evening dress. He remained for the greater part of the time seated, thus affording a better view of the Chinese Minister, who stared about him with never-ceasing wonder, presenting to the interested audience a bland, almost childlike face, in which it was difficult to suppose diplomatic art could ever find expression.

The Russian Ambassador, arriving late, introduced a disturbing element among the representatives of European nations, which some people might say was characteristic. His seat had been fixed at the farthest end of the first row, and in passing to it Germany, Austria, Italy, and France were temporarily disturbed as they courteously made way for him. But he was not absolutely last, the most dilatory comer of the distinguished circle being the Turkish Ambassador. His excellency, strolling in with fez on head and a great jewel flashing on his left breast, chanced upon the Archbishop of Canterbury, who sat at the end of the front bench retained by the bishops.

The Archbishop's greeting of the representative of the Sultan was effusive. Just behind his Grace, whose position at the end of the bench seemed to endow him with the office of host, and who with unwearied assiduity had welcomed each coming guest, towered the tall form of Count Münster, who warmly seconded the Archbishop's endeavour to make every one that passed feel welcome.

Behind the broad bench shared by the bishops and the judges (behind it looking from the throne) was the table at which the Chairman of Committees and the clerks are accustomed to sit, fortified by books of reference and many documents. To-day this table had been cleared of its usual contents, and before it sat the three clerks, in black gowns and grey wigs, the one black line in the gay assembly. It was behind these that the temporary rows of backless benches were arranged for the accommodation of noble lords who had given up their seats to fair ladies. It seemed to ordinary intelligence that a more convenient way of fixing these benches would have been to follow the lines of the ordinary cross benches—that is to say, to arrange them in rows facing the throne. Probably, however, had this been done the Constitution would in some subtle manner have suffered. Accordingly the benches were set sideways, noble lords seating themselves after the fashion compelled by the accommodation of an Irish car. This rule was enforced with the exception of the particular peer who had chanced to get at the end of each seat, and who incontinently turned his face towards the throne and his back to his neighbours.

Behind a thin streak of red which bordered the ordinary rows of benches sat the ladies. To the left of the throne the wives of peers, and peeresses in their own right, had seats assigned to them. On the corresponding benches opposite were ladies of noble families. The galleries, with the exception of a few yards of that to the left of the throne, were also given up to the use of ladies. The exceptional space was filled by foreign attachés and other highly privileged strangers. Most of these wore uniform. Conspicuous amongst them was one in a magnificent Eastern costume of white silk gleaming with gold threads, his swarthy face surmounted by a turban—a stately and picturesque dress which made to look more than

usually absurd the odd, ill-fitting red gowns slashed with bars of ermine which the peers wear in the presence of the Sovereign in Parliament.

The ladies had seated themselves, wearing the opera cloaks and shawls in which they had driven down to the House. At a few minutes to two the blare of trumpets announced that royalty was at hand. Cloaks and shawls were forthwith slipped off, displaying the full charms of white shoulders and glistening diamonds. The prevailing colour of dress was white, with here and there a flash of blue, or a more timid presentation of delicate sage green. Prominent among the peeresses sat a lady in deepest black—black dress, black shawl, black gloves, and raven hair, from the depths of which shone three diamond stars. This, it was whispered round the throng of strangers in the gallery over the bar, was the Countess of Dudley. But the Countess of Dudley was not present.

Just on the stroke of two the audience rose with a quick rustling sound and made obeisance to the Princess of Wales, who entered a few feet in advance of the royal dukes and princesses who accompanied her. Bowing graciously and smiling sweetly in answer to the welcome which beamed upon her from every eye in the assembly, her Royal Highness took her seat on the hitherto empty woolsack, and was joined by the Duchess of Connaught and the Princess Frederica of Hanover, daughter of the late King George. At the same time entered the Prince of Wales, who was conducted to a chair to the right of the throne. The Duke of Edinburgh, the Duke of Connaught, and the Duke of Cambridge, having escorted the princesses, took their seats on the front bench corresponding to that on which the Archbishop of Canterbury and the more fortunate bishops sat in front of the ambassadors. At this moment her Majesty's Government were solely represented by Lord Cranbrook. On the front Opposition bench sat Earl Granville and Lord Selborne. The attendance of peers whose names are known to readers of Parliamentary debates was unusually limited. If Lord Hampton, Lord Houghton, and Lord Rosebery be mentioned, the list is almost exhausted.

At ten minutes past two there filed into the Chamber, through the open doors behind the throne, a procession headed by gorgeously attired heralds, whose path towards the farther

side of the throne was beset with difficulties. There was the necessity of bowing, first to the Prince of Wales on the left, to the Princess of Wales and her companion princesses on the woolsack, and, finally, when this was accomplished in four distinct and elaborate genuflexions, the heralds came full upon the three royal dukes sitting at the end of the bench to the left of the woolsack, and were fain to bow again.

This was, finally, happily accomplished, and the Queen was seen entering, with slow step, the centre of a brilliant throng, in which were recognised the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, holding aloft the sword of state, and the Marquis of Winchester bearing on a cushion the cap of maintenance. Princess Beatrice accompanied her Majesty, and as the Queen seated herself on the throne, she deftly released the long white riband pendant from the back of the Queen's cap, which, catching in the seat, threatened to tear the crown from the Sovereign's head in presence of all the world. The Queen was dressed in mourning, though of a somewhat less decided character than that in which she is accustomed to be seen. The sombre colour of her dress was lightened by broad bands of white, and across her breast lay the blue riband of the Garter. For jewels she wore a crown-shaped circlet of diamonds, and on her breast the Koh-i-noor.

Princess Beatrice, who was dressed in blue, and who, in respect of colour, was more pronounced than any lady in the assembly, stood close by the chair at the right of the throne. Prince Leopold, scarcely recognisable in the uniform of an Elder Brother of the Trinity House, stood to the left of the Queen, before the vacant chair which so many years ago the Prince Consort used to fill on occasions like to-day.

At an almost imperceptible gesture from the Queen, the audience, which had remained standing, seated themselves, and Black Rod was despatched in search of the Commons. There was now time to look, as every one did, for the Prime Minister; but he had not come with the brilliant throng, and the ceremony of opening Parliament was begun and completed without him. In a few moments the familiar roar was heard, and presently the Speaker was discerned standing at the Bar, where he had been washed up on the crest of a wave of rushing members of the House of Commons. To his left was Captain Gosset, Serjeant-

at-Arms, but without the mace, for, on approaching the presence of the royal authority of whom the mace is a symbol, he had given that imposing feature of Constitutional Government into the hands of an attendant at the door of the House of Lords. Black Rod stood to the right, and just behind the Speaker was the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Cross had succeeded in getting a good point of view a little to the left; but the First Lord of the Admiralty vainly attempted to survey the scene over the shoulders of Thomas Cave.

Quiet being restored, Cairns advanced, and, bending on one knee, proffered the Queen a manuscript he had brought with him. With a gesture that must have been imperceptible to those at a distance, her Majesty beckoned refusal, and Cairns, interpreting this as a command to read the Speech, retired a few paces. Then, standing on the steps of the throne, and partially hiding the Prince of Wales from view, he read, in a voice that reached all corners of the chamber, the last "Speech from the Throne" that can be delivered in the life of the present Parliament. This done, the Queen rose, and, with a slight acknowledgment of the presence of the august assembly gathered under the historic roof, walked out, not stopping, as on former occasions, to speak to the Princess of Wales, whom she passed on the way.

Her Majesty out of sight, the Princess of Wales followed, escorted by the Prince of Wales. The Princess Frederica of Hanover and the Duchess of Connaught went in their train. The three Royal Princes on the floor of the House doffed their plumed hats and vanished through the doorway. The brilliant assembly, meeting and mingling for a few moments on the floor of the House, vanished from sight. The Speaker and the Commons returned to their own House, and it was there formally announced that the session of 1880 had commenced.

**Mar. 8.—Dissolu- Members met in the House of Commons this
tion announced.**

afternoon wholly unprepared for the surprise in store. The business on the paper not being of a striking or important character, the attendance was rather less than usual for the first hour of the sitting. Among other absentees were Hartington and Gladstone. Neither side was crowded, thus indicating (what appears to be the fact) that the sudden decision

to dissolve Parliament at Easter was as much a secret on the Ministerial side as among members of the Opposition. Up to the very last moment the delusion was kept up by what may, upon consideration, seem a somewhat significant incident. The regular questions on the paper being disposed of, Sir Charles Russell rose, and asked the President of the Board of Trade whether it would not be possible for the Select Committee appointed to consider the Grain Cargo Bill to report on the particular subject of loading in sacks, without waiting to consider other matters submitted to them, so that the subject might be dealt with forthwith. The question was addressed to Lord Sandon, who by a fortuitous circumstance chanced to be ill, though his indisposition was happily of so temporary a character that he appeared in the precincts of the House immediately after the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made his statement, and remained about throughout the sitting.

Of course if Sandon had happened to be in his place it would have been difficult for him, being in possession of the Cabinet secret, to answer the question precisely as it was answered by the Secretary of the Admiralty. That gentleman was able to say it would be quite possible for the Committee to report in a month or six weeks, so that legislation might take place "before the end of the summer." This is an unusual phrase; but its substitution for the more customary one, "the end of the session," was not noticed, and doubtless its significance did not occur to Egerton, who simply read what was written down for him on a piece of paper.

This business being settled, and it being duly made known to the country that the Government have made every arrangement for meeting the popular demand raised by Plimsoll's Bill, the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose and proposed to "make a few remarks." There was something in his manner and the tone of his voice which instantly riveted attention, and before the words were pronounced the House knew that its fate was sealed. The contention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer went to show that the only reason the present Parliament had been summoned for a seventh session was in view of the Irish famine. The necessities of the case being now met, there remained nothing that imperatively kept Parliament together, and all the Government had to consider was whether it were better to dissolve at

Easter or at Whitsuntide. On a careful consideration of the best interests of the country, they had decided that Easter was the time, and accordingly the dissolution will take place from the amended date fixed for the Easter recess—the 23rd inst. This would make it possible for the new Parliament to meet again in May.

There was some slight cheering at this announcement, but it was rather of a spasmodic character, members evidently being too much taken aback to be able to find immediate expression for the mingled feelings with which they heard the statement. The Chancellor went on to say that it was desirable the Budget should be before the country prior to the general election, and he therefore proposed to introduce it on Thursday next. By this time the Ministerialists had recovered their presence of mind, and greeted this heroic resolve with a cheer. The Bill dealing with Corrupt Practices and with the conveyance of voters in boroughs it was highly desirable should be passed, and he hoped this might be done. He assured the House that he had taken it into his confidence at the earliest possible moment, a statement accepted on the spur of the moment by general cheering.

Forster, rising in the absence of the Leader of the Opposition, said he had heard with great satisfaction the statement from the Treasury bench, a feeling shared by members on that side of the House. He wished to know up to what date it was intended to take votes upon account. The Chancellor of the Exchequer replied "three months." Dilke inquired, "What about the Water Bill?" This was instinctively felt to be a crucial question, there being an impression so widely spread as to amount almost to conviction that it is upon the London Water Bill a Ministry which has essayed many great feats of Imperial policy at length finds itself checked. Cross said no bargain had been made with the water companies. One had been suggested, and if Parliament did not think it desirable, there was an end of the matter.

Another important piece of information was drawn from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to the effect that private Bills would be put in the same position in the new Parliament as they stand in respect to the present. The Attorney-General gave notice of his intention to bring in a fresh Bill dealing with

Corrupt Practices. In reply to Henry James, he said the Criminal Code Bill would of course be dropped; but he thought the Committee to whom the Bankruptcy Bill had been remitted might report before Easter.

It was a considerably curtailed audience to whom these latter statements were made. Since the moment the news the Chancellor of the Exchequer had communicated was actually in possession of members, the House had been rapidly thinning, and at this time there were more members in and about the telegraph office than in the House of Commons. In the lobbies all was excitement, but the general feeling on both sides appeared to be one of satisfaction that the tension had been broken, and that the long-looked-for struggle was now actually at hand.

In the House of Lords a similar announcement was made in much briefer terms by the Prime Minister. Here, as in the Commons, members were unprepared for the crisis. The news was received by the few peers present without the slightest indication of feeling. They at least were sure to come back with the new Parliament, however it might fare with individual members of the other House.

Mar. 18.—Historical last words. On Monday night, by an unpremeditated coincidence, an event happened in Parliament to which the newspapers have not called attention, though history will doubtless not find it unworthy of notice. On that night Gladstone in one House, and Beaconsfield in the other, for the last time addressed the Parliament which has proved such a memorable turning-point in the career of both. Gladstone spoke first, having taken upon himself the duty of demolishing the latest financial scheme of his former pupil. He carried with him a sign, the significance of which is familiar to those accustomed to his House of Commons habits. He was most carefully dressed, his hair—alas! woefully scanty—was brushed with much solicitude, and in his buttonhole he wore a white rose. All this, more particularly the flower, meant that Gladstone intended to make an important speech. Ordinarily he is most careless in his attire, and averages the trouble he says he gives to his hatter by drawing very little on the resources of his tailor. But when he proposes to make a great speech in the House of Commons he always submits himself to the control of others, puts on his very

best clothes, and passively stands whilst a flower is pinned in his buttonhole.

The portent of Monday night was not misleading. He did not say much on the general question of the Budget. But for the Probate Duty Bill, which adds to the already sufficient tax on frugality, increasing the duty on small estates whilst dealing tenderly with the wealth of millionaires, he had no words too strong, no condemnation too severe. He thundered at the Chancellor of the Exchequer across the table, and whilst the Opposition loudly cheered, the Ministerialists sat sullen and silent, incapable of answering the argument, even by their favourite scheme of counter-cheering.

This dumbfounding of the Ministerialists was of itself a remarkable success. The Ministerial case must be bad indeed if gentlemen who sit on the back benches cannot be prevailed on to cheer for it. Gladstone himself disclaimed all hope of more substantial success. He had, he said, done his duty when he had made the real bearing of the case clear to the country, and had entered his protest against the Bill. But as it turned out, he underrated the power of his own eloquence and the solvent force of truth. His speech was made on Monday, and on the following morning he left for Midlothian. On Tuesday the Bill was further discussed in its later stages. To-day (Wednesday), at the last moment, when it had passed through Committee, and was before the House in its penultimate stage, Stafford Northcote quietly announced his submission to Gladstone's views, and moved amendments which practically met them to the extent that he abandoned that portion of the Bill which increased the Probate Duty on small estates up to £2,000 in value.

Mounted on his favourite horse, Spirited Foreign Policy, the Premier in the other House caused it to prance and curvet to the beaming delight of Cranbrook and the undisguised admiration of the messengers at the open doorway. He had an excellent foil for his wit in Stratheden and Campbell, a peer whose oratorical manner, if reproduced by an actor in comedy, would be denounced as an exaggeration insulting to the intelligence of the pit. The Premier made some good fun out of the eccentric custodian of British foreign policy, which was serenely relished by the august assembly. But it was when he came to the

dark passages pointing to the mysterious conspiracy against England, which in spite of our continued triumph of the past six years, stalks through the capitals of Europe, it was then that the Premier was at his best. Then did his voice reach its most sonorous tones, then was his brow contracted with mingled resolve and indignation, then was his right arm waved aloft as if cheering on a united England to a final assault, then did Cranbrook's smile yield to a look more suitable to the solemnity of the occasion, and then did the messengers crowding at the door tremble with unnamed horror, and, their emotions strained too highly for speech, nudge each other in interchange of opinion that here truly was a great man.

The physical energy with which this election speech was delivered was certainly very remarkable for a man in his seventy-fourth year. There is, however, unmistakable evidence of pumping up in the Premier's latest oratorical feats. The vigour is spasmodic, the strength artificial, and the listener has a feeling that at any moment a spring may break, a screw grow loose, and the whole machinery come to a sudden stop.

Gladstone's *tour de force* are perfectly natural. When after one of his great speeches he resumes his seat, he is, and often proves himself to be, ready to start again. With the Premier, the excitement of the moment over and the appointed task achieved, he falls into a state of prostration painful to witness. His eyes seem to lose all expression, his cheeks fall in, and his face takes on a ghastly hue. Physically he is at least ten years older than Gladstone. He, nevertheless, retains something of the dandy air of Vivian Grey. His hair is a marvel for a man of seventy-four. Just before he left the Commons this triumph of art was permitted to show a few grey threads, a circumstance at the time accepted as confirming the current rumour that he was about to retire from office. But when he went to the Lords this graceful concession to the approach of old age was abandoned, and now, whilst noble lords many years his juniors sit about him bald or grey, Lord Beaconsfield shakes ambrosial locks, alike untamed and untinted by age.

Mar. 24.—Dying
—dead!

The ninth Parliament of Victoria, which met for the first time on the 5th of March, 1874, died at half-past two this afternoon, aged six years and nineteen days.

Of the members forming both Houses very few were present during the last moments. The House of Commons was summoned for half-past one; but there were not at any time enough present to form a quorum. In these circumstances the Speaker, instead of taking his usual seat, took the chair at the table occupied by Raikes when the House is in Committee. Here he had the opportunity of holding a friendly chat with Stafford Northcote. In addition to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, there were of Ministers present W. H. Smith, Eustace Cecil, Barrington, Dyke, Elphinstone, and Plunket, who, for the second time in the history of this Parliament, took his seat on the Treasury bench on appointment to office. This time his occupancy was even more brief than his tenure of the Irish Solicitor-Generalship, for scarcely had the new Paymaster-General taken his seat than the summons of Black Rod was heard at the door, and the end of all things (as far as the Parliament of 1874 is concerned) was at hand.

The full total of members present in the Commons was twenty-seven, of whom the larger number sat on the Ministerial side. Knatchbull-Hugessen was the only member of the late Ministry present. Others seated on the Opposition side were Dilke, Fawcett, Sullivan, Brassey, and Alexander Gordon. On the Conservative side there were several members taking their last look at the House of Commons from its privileged benches. Of these were Baillie-Cochrane, Bowyer, and Mellor. Newdegate, his mind untroubled by the contingencies of an election contest, had come to see the last of a Parliament in whose hearing he has so often lifted up his voice in solemn counsel and unheeded reproof.

At a few minutes to two the cry of "Black Rod" echoing through the lobby brought the Serjeant-at-Arms to his feet, and the independence of the Commons was promptly and practically asserted by closing and barring the outer door. Black Rod, knocking thrice, was admitted without further resistance, and, advancing towards the table, thrice made low obeisance to the mace. The delivery of the familiar message with which General Knollys was charged was invested with peculiar interest by reason of a little incident which happened on the last occasion he had appeared to summon the House. Bowyer had then publicly taken note of the fact that,

contrary to established usage and the privilege of the Commons, Black Rod had "required" the attendance of members in the House of Lords, instead of "desiring" it. Would the messenger from the Lords prove contumacious? Would he "desire" or "require;" and if the latter, what next?

Bowyer, eager in his new-born enthusiasm for the repression of lordly aggression, had strategically occupied the corner seat just below the gangway, as near as possible to the spot at which Black Rod would halt and make fateful choice of phraseology. General Knollys proceeded through the formula of the summons till he reached the word for which every one was watching. Then he distinctly paused, and, drawing himself together for a final effort, proceeded to say that "the presence of members of this Honourable House is **DESIRED** to hear the Lords Commissioners give their assent to certain Bills."

The House of Lords was still more empty than the House of Commons. At a first glance round the benches it seemed that none of her Majesty's Ministers were present. On close inspection, Cranbrook was discovered among the five cloaked and cocked-hatted figures on the bench before the woolsack commissioned to represent her Majesty. On the arrival of the Speaker at the Bar, whither he was accompanied by all the gentlemen named as having been in the Commons, the Commission was recited, the Royal assent was given to the few Bills on the table, and then the Queen's Speech was read. After this came the prorogation, the House being "prorogued till Tuesday, the 13th April, then to sit for the disposal of business."

This, as all who heard it knew, was a mere device in completion of the fiction that ignored the imminence of dissolution. The prorogation was in all respects identical with the usual form. But members at the Bar, though bidden to meet again on the 13th of April, knew very well, as they turned and followed the Speaker, that the Parliament of which they formed units was actually dead, and that they might presently, if they pleased, read the fiat of dissolution in the *Gazette*.

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